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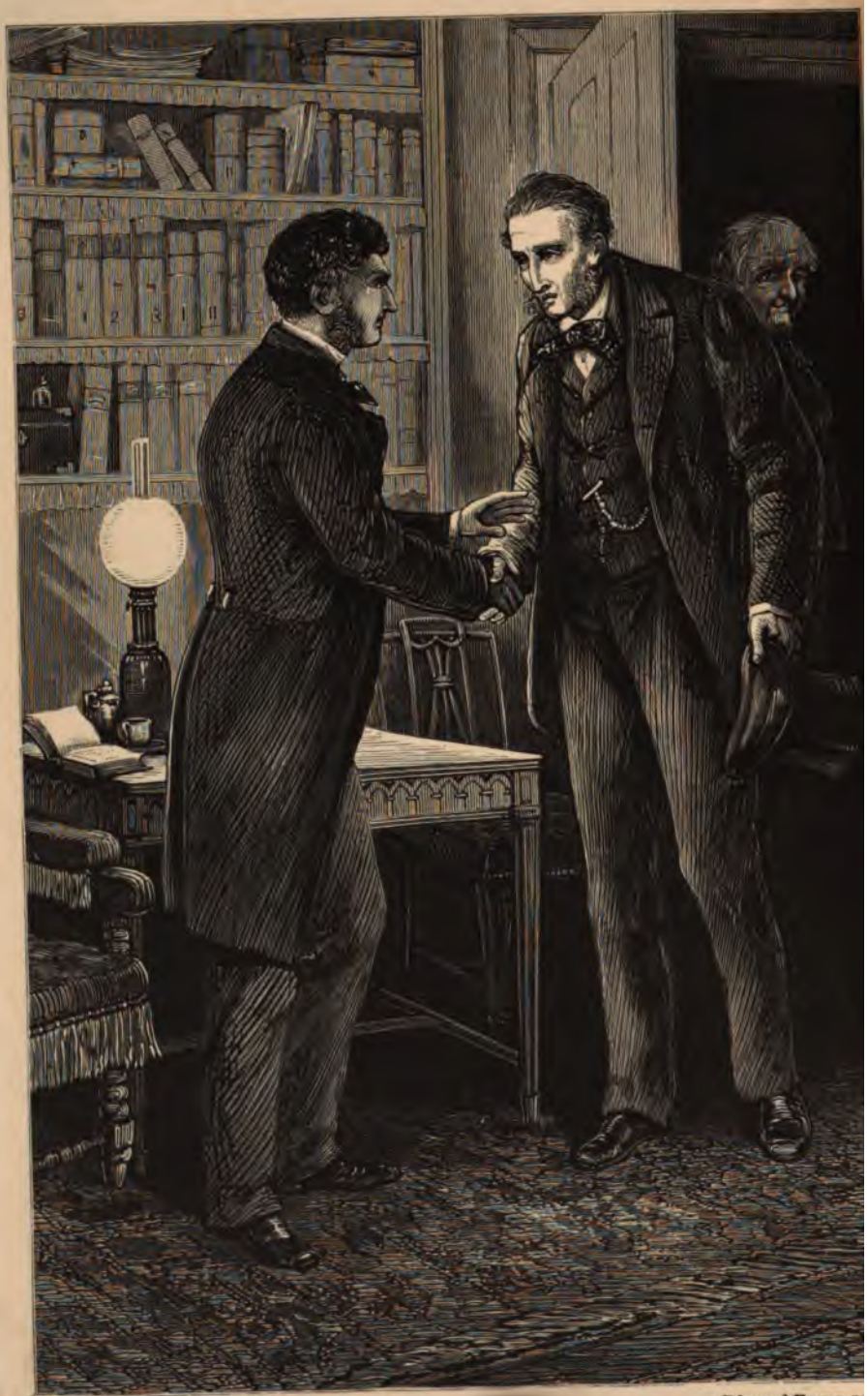

R. Caldecott, del. Edmund Evans, sc

MARK

BELGRAVIA

A LONDON MAGAZINE

CONDUCTED BY

M. E. BRADDON

AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' 'AURORA FLOYD,' ETC. ETC.

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Annabel Brown	382
Ashantee Country, The	60
At the Bar. A Story of a Rapacious Creditor	38
Aunt Lora's Long Ago	291
Carlists Forty Years Ago, The	166
Dead Sorrow's Kin:	
Chap. I. For her Soul's Screen	485
II. Waste Care	495
III. Was Life worth living then?	499
Doing Business in Paris	126
Extremes	298
Folk-lore of Far-off Lands	285
Forecast Shadow of Death	30
Free Lunch, A	176
Great Cuban Difficulty. An Essay ending in Smoke	311
Griselda. A Study at the Princess's Theatre	246
Her Master:	
Part II. Chap. I. In the Stream	69
II. Bitter Blossom	71
III. At the Gold Bars	76
IV. Gray as the World	79
V. As an Ember among Ashes	82
VI. Full of Fear	87
VII. In a Mist of Miseries	91
VIII. At last	94
IX. He clothed her White and Red	97
How I lost the County	220
How Mr. Penlake exercised a Proctor	420
In Queer Company	339
Irish Crime	49
Lost for Love:	
Chaps. I.-III.	5
IV.-VI.	133
VII.-IX.	261
X.-XIII.	389
'Love-Philters'	98
Love-Tokens. A Chapter of Instances	465
Major's Luncheon, The. An ower true Tale	257
Mrs. Maycock's Keys	56
Mulligan's Poteen	228
New-Year's Day in the Country	373
Observations on English Domestic Architecture	429
On some Difficulties in Nomenclature	351
Poems:	
At the Fifth Act	436
Chalked	37
Notch in the Blade, The	309
Sal Parker's Ghost	181
Ye Explanation of True Chivalrie	516

PAGE
Revelation from the Sea, A 303
Righted at Last:
Chap. I. The Locum Tenens 325
II. The inevitable Dilemma 327
III. In worse Confusion 330
IV. Prudence goes to the Winds 333
V. After Waiting comes Reward 335
Shakespeare's Games 482
Single Life 320
Something like a Twelfth-Night Character 475
Suspiria 448
That poor dear Captain Lambswool. A Tale of the Martyrdom of Man 185
Through Fire and Water:
Chaps. XXIII.-XXIX 101
Through the Breakers 453
Two Inquests, The:
Part I. 'Coming Events cast their Shadows before.'
Chap. I. First Impressions 197
II. Mrs. Piggott 199
III. Overton Churchyard 202
IV. A Revelation 206
V. The Summons 212
Part II. 'A Spirit passed before my Face; the Hair of my Flesh stood up.'
Chap. I. Deepening Shadows 357
II. Amy's Room 359
III. The Summons answered 364
L'Envoi 371
Why that old Gentleman paid. A Sequel to 'At the Bar' . . . 438
Woodcock Shooting 510

ILLUSTRATIONS

Mark Chamney . . . . . Drawn by *R. Caldecott* Frontispiece
'Chalked' . . . . . *Thomas Beach* . 37
Judith in Tears . . . . . *J. A. Pasquier* . 78
Blind Scipio . . . . . *George Kirby* . . 116
The Doctor makes Amends . . . . . *R. Caldecott* . . 144
Sally's Return . . . . . *H. French* . . 184
A Relic of the Past . . . . . *George Kirby* . . 199
'Thim's Sthrangers comin' up' . . . . . *John Proctor* . . 236
Loo makes Acquaintance with the Poets . . . . *R. Caldecott* . . 273
'This Notch my Sword he gave' . . . . . *C. Cattermo e* . . 309
Godfrey declares himself . . . . . *Louis Huard* . . 334
The Hour of Doom . . . . . *George Kirby* . . 368
'You shouldn't have done that' . . . . . *R. Caldecott* . . 407
'I must tell you, Margaret,' she sobbed . . . . *Louis Huard* . . 455
Through the changing Wood . . . . . *C. Cattermole* . . 436
After Dinner . . . . . *H. French* . . 503

BELGRAVIA

NOVEMBER 1873

LOST FOR LOVE

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

CHAPTER I.

'Oui, sans doute, tout meurt; ce monde est un grande rêve,
Et le peu de bonheur qui nous vient en chemin,
Nous n'avons pas plutôt ce roseau dans la main,
Que le vent nous l'enlève.'

DR. OLLIVANT sat alone in his library and consulting-room, a spacious chamber built out at the back of his house in Wimpole-street, after his day's work was ended—a long day and a heavy one; for at six-and-thirty years of age the doctor found himself possessed of a great practice—a practice that recompensed him largely for his devotion to science, but left little margin in his life for pleasure. It may indeed be doubted if Dr. Ollivant knew the meaning of that word 'pleasure,' except so far as it was accessible to him in dictionaries. His father had been a hard-working—the world added money-grubbing—country practitioner, and, at the earliest stage in which the infant brain is open to receive impressions, had striven to imbue his son's mind with a correct idea of life, contemplated always from his own particular point of view: that life was meant for hard work—that without hard work no man could expect to succeed—that worldly success was the supreme good to which the soul of man could aspire.

Cuthbert Ollivant learnt the lesson, but applied it after his own fashion. Had he possessed no higher brain than his father, he would most likely have restricted his notion of success—or, as his father called it, 'getting on'—to the consolidation and improvement of his father's practice, the steady-going old-fashioned family-surgeon business, in the sleepy old town of Long Sutton, Devon. But the lad happened to be endowed with a larger mind

illumined the Ollivant family within the present century; and for him success meant originality—the fruition of new ideas, a step forward in the march of science; or, if not absolute invention, at least such an application of the wisdom of the past as should achieve some fresh good in the present.

For a youth with such yearnings, Long Sutton was not large enough. Samuel Ollivant well-nigh uprooted the scanty wisp of hair which encircled his bald crown when, after walking the hospitals and going through the usual curriculum, his son told him that he would return no more to the sleepy little Devonshire town, where his race had abided and thriven from generation to generation. His father might dispose of the good old family practice to whomsoever he would. He, Cuthbert, would remain in London—had indeed been already elected parish-doctor in a populous district by Bethnal-green. The pay was of the poorest, he wrote cheerfully, but the experience would be immense.

Mr. Ollivant groaned and gnashed his teeth, and told his wife that her son was an idiot; but nothing he could say to the benighted young man could shake his purpose. Cuthbert began his work in the purlieus of Bethnal-green at three-and-twenty years of age, and went on with it steadily till he was twenty-six; and, except at Christmas time, when he came to the home of his forefathers for a duty-visit, Long Sutton knew him no more. After three years' unflagging labour—there had never been such a parish-doctor within the memory of the oldest overseer—he went abroad, studied in France and Germany, pushed on to St. Petersburg, made himself familiar with every school of medicine, and was called back to England, a few months before his thirtieth birthday, to attend his father's deathbed.

'You've made a great mistake in life, Cuthbert,' said the old man, during the one brief hour in which he was able to talk rationally with his son. 'You might have made this a splendid practice, if you had worked with me for the last seven years; as it is, the business has fallen off. I've been getting old; didn't like to have a stranger about me, so wouldn't take a partner. Filby and Jackson have undermined me in the place, Cuthbert; the practice isn't what it was when you were a boy at school, by three hundred a year. But I leave you a comfortable little bit of money, in spite of everything. It's your mother's doing—there never was such a woman to save money.'

The 'comfortable little bit of money' thus spoken of amounted to some thousands, quite enough to justify Cuthbert Ollivant in the step he took immediately after his father's funeral. He sold the Long-Sutton practice to Filby and Jackson, who already had three-fourths of the town on their books, and by this purchase established a monopoly. He would have sold his father's household goods also, but here his mother interposed. The chairs and tables might be old-

fashioned, cumbrous, inelegant; but they were the chairs and tables she had known all her married life.

'Two-and-thirty years, Cuthbert; think of that!'

'I do, mother, and for that very reason think we ought to begin our new life with new furniture.'

'I am too old to begin a new life, dear, and I like the old things best.' This with a tender glance at an ancient Spanish-mahogany sideboard that age had made almost as black as ebony. 'They don't make such things now.'

'I'm rather glad they don't,' remarked the profane youth. 'It will cost more money to move the things than they are worth, I believe, mother; but if you like them, they shall be moved. I'd as soon sit upon one chair as another. I have no artistic tastes.'

So the ancient sideboard, the secretaires, and bureaus, and four-post bedsteads of a bygone age—all pervaded by a certain grimness that stood for respectability—were conveyed from Long Sutton to the house which Cuthbert Ollivant had taken for himself in Wimpole-street, and being set up there, under Mrs. Ollivant's direction, made the London house almost as grim and dark and ancient-looking as the home of Cuthbert's infancy. Perhaps Wimpole-street itself is hardly the gayest or brightest of thoroughfares. Its length is to the stranger akin to despair, and it has been hardly dealt with as to width, whereby the shadow of over-the-way broods sullenly upon the fronts of the houses that turn their backs to the afternoon sun. But Wimpole-street is eminently respectable, fashionable even, or at any rate appertaining to the West-end; and Dr. Ollivant—he had taken the higher degree in Paris, and made haste now to obtain it in London—had chosen Wimpole-street as a fair base for his operations. He had no more to do with Bethnal-green, but he gave two hours of every morning—from eight till ten—to gratis patients. For the first year of his Wimpole-street life they were almost his only patients. Then little by little his fame spread; he had taken to himself a specialty during his continental travels, namely, the treatment of heart-disease—had written a little book upon this theme, and published the same in London and Paris. By the aid of this book he advertised himself into the notice of a good many idle people who fancied they had heart-disease, and a few who were real sufferers. Rich old ladies and gentlemen, who lived alone and lived too well, came to him, liked his manner—a grave and somewhat cold reserve which was yet courteous, and implied profound wisdom—and made him their physician in ordinary. 'Ollivant on Cardiac Diseases' and 'Ollivant on Auscultation' became almost standard works. In a word, Cuthbert Ollivant had succeeded, and by the time five years had run off the lease of the house in Wimpole-street, had made for himself a position which he deemed the stepping-stone to future distinction.

His mother lived with him now, as she had lived with him from the beginning, the careful mistress of his house, the intelligent companion of his brief intervals of leisure. Her character presented a curious mixture of the ultra-prosaic with the intellectual and imaginative. She would lay down her volume of Wordsworth or Shelley to order the dinner or give out a week's supply of grocery. She made her son's money go farther than perhaps any one else in the world could have made it go. She would not suffer a stale crust of bread or a basin of dripping to be wasted between January and December; yet she contrived to retain the respect of her servants, and was accounted a liberal mistress. Her son's simple dinners were ordered with a discretion and cooked with a nicety that could hardly have been exceeded at a West-end Club. Every detail of the table was perfection, though no modern elegance, no phantom-like glass or rich-hued majolica, adorned the board. The old-fashioned heavily-cut decanters, the ponderous plate sparkled and shone upon the snowy linen; and, pleasantest of all, was the mother's face—a feminine likeness of the son's—with deep earnest eyes, white teeth, and mobile mouth.

It was half-past nine o'clock, a November night, a wet night in a wet autumn, the rain beating heavily on the skylight above the doctor's head. He had dined, and spent his after-dinner hour with his mother, talking literature and politics, for she made it her business to be interested and well informed in everything that interested her son, and had come down to his own room to read—to read the last scientific book worth reading.

An old-fashioned silver teapot, a breakfast cup and saucer, stood on a Chippendale table at his elbow. The doctor smiled to himself as he poured out the tea—a grave half-ironical smile.

'Old-bachelor ways already,' he thought; 'tea-drinking and midnight study. But, then, I never was a young man—in the common acceptation of the phrase.'

A double knock at the hall-door caught his quick ear.

'A cabman's knock,' he said, with a little discontented look, and a longing glance at his open book; 'some dropper-in come for an evening's gossip—a nuisance, for I want to get to the bottom of this fellow's ideas.'

'This fellow' was the author of the book—a formidable volume of five hundred pages or so, half of which were still uncut.

Dr. Ollivant was not famous for his social instincts; but, as he was apt to remark to his mother, 'a man can't go through the world without some people insisting upon knowing him;' and a few people had been pertinacious enough to establish themselves on familiar terms with the doctor, in spite of himself—self-elected friends. They were for the most part of his own profession. He asked them to dinner two or three times in the year, and suffered them to drop in

now and then of an evening, but gave no active encouragement to their visits.

A card was brought him by his servant—an elderly man, who had been his father's factotum, and had accompanied the furniture from Long Sutton. Dr. Ollivant looked at it listlessly, then brightened with a flash of surprise.

'Mark Chamney!' he exclaimed, in a half-dreamy tone, 'Mark Chamney!' Then hurriedly to the servant, 'Show the gentleman in here directly.'

He began to poke the fire furiously—a man's favourite form of hospitality, and then went to the door to receive his visitor.

Mr. Chamney had been his school-friend more than twenty years ago, when he was a lad at a west-country public school—his bosom-friend in the days when he had some kind of belief in friendship.

The unexpected visitor came out of the dim light of the hall into the clear white light of the doctor's study. A tall man, of the type known as lanky, with long loose limbs and a cadaverous countenance, redeemed from absolute ugliness by honest blue eyes—eyes that were mild and tender as a woman's.

This was Mark Chamney, the doctor's senior by four years, and his protector in the days gone by. Chamney had been a dunce and an athlete. Cuthbert, a fragile youth of fourteen, had construed Homer and Virgil for his friend, whose prompt interference had shielded the younger boy from the school bullies.

Cuthbert—himself in no manner deficient in pluck—had worshipped Mark as the very incarnation of force and courage—his Achilles, his Hector, his Ajax; and they had parted at the close of Mark's last term, swearing to be friends for life, and had never seen each other from that day until this.

Dr. Ollivant felt a faint pang of remorse at sight of the altered face—the same, but O, how changed!—remembering how little he had ever done to perpetuate this boyish friendship. But was not the other equally to blame? The two men clasped hands.

'I should have known you anywhere,' said Mark.

Dr. Ollivant could hardly echo the declaration. He could only grasp his friend's hand a little harder, and say:

'You are about the only man in the world I should be glad to see to-night, Chamney.'

'And I'm glad to hear you say as much, Ollivant, for I've come to claim the fulfilment of an old promise—a long-forgotten one, perhaps.'

'No,' said the other gravely, 'not forgotten, if you mean our old vow of life-long friendship. I have gone through life without acquiring the knack of making many friends. I doubt if I have ever made one real one since the days when you used to take my part against the Goliaths of Hillersley Grammar-school.'

This was said as heartily as it was in Cuthbert Ollivant to say anything—heartiness not being a characteristic of his manner.

'Odd, that we should never have knocked up against each other in all these years,' continued the doctor after a brief interval of silence, during which Mr. Chamney had dropped into a chair, with a certain air of listlessness or fatigue, widely different from that muscular exuberance which Cuthbert remembered at Hillersley.

'Hardly so odd as it may appear at the first showing,' answered Chamney. 'Did you ever take any particular pains to look me up?'

'I don't believe I have had an idle day since I left Hillersley.'

'That means No. Well, Ollivant, if you *had* looked for me, the result would have been pretty much the same; for I have spent the best part of the interval on a sheep-run in Queensland.'

The doctor felt relieved of some portion of that remorse which had seemed to weigh upon his spirit since Mark Chamney's entrance.

'What took you to Queensland?' he asked, ringing the bell for the man-of-all-work, who seemed to have an intuitive knowledge of what was wanted from him, as he came immediately, furnished with case bottles and a decanter of sherry on an old-fashioned silver tray—one of the heirlooms of the house of Ollivant. Even the case bottles were heirlooms, heavier and clumsier than modern bottles.

'What took me to Queensland?' repeated the visitor, extending his long legs upon the doctor's hearth, and folding his gaunt arms. He was clothed from head to foot in a light gray stuff, which made him look his biggest. 'A speculative temper, and an aversion to any mode of earning my living which was open to me at home. I was not a genius like you, Cuthbert. I always hated head-work, and was plucked ignominiously in every examination at Hillersley, as I daresay you remember. But I wasn't bad at figures, as long as I didn't see 'em upon paper. I heard of men doing wonders out yonder in the sheep-line; so, when my father—a prosperous solicitor at Exeter—proposed making me his articled clerk, I saved myself the trouble of disputing the point, by running away. I needn't bore you with the details of my flight. I left Exeter with a few pounds in my pocket, and worked my way out to Australia, before the mast. I had rather a hard time of it for the first year or so, and made a nearer acquaintance with starvation than I cared about. But before the second year was over, I was manager for a man who had been lucky enough to get hold of one of the finest stations on the Darling Downs, extending upwards of ten miles in every direction. He held a squatter's lease from the government at a mere nominal rent, and on muster days I have stood at the gate and helped to count seventy thousand sheep as they went through. My employer made sixty thousand pounds in less than ten years, but contrived to drink himself to death in the same time.

He had made me his partner a few years before he died—delirium tremens and business habits not being compatible—a fact of which he was sufficiently conscious to know that he couldn't get on without me. At the time he died sheep happened to be rather low; I had saved enough money, with assistance from the Australian banks, to buy his share of the station; and so began life afresh at thirty years of age, worth twenty thousand pounds after all debts were paid—went on from this pretty comfortably, taking the bad with the good, and kept hard at it for fifteen years more, when I took it into my head I ought to come back to England and see my daughter.'

'Your daughter!' exclaimed Dr. Ollivant. 'Then you had married?'—as if it were the most unnatural thing a man could do.

'Yes,' answered the other with a profound sigh, 'I married the dearest girl in the world. She had come out to Hobart Town as a governess; a solitary young creature, with hardly a friend in the world; and I met her there in one of my summer holiday trips, and loved her from the hour I first saw her. I suppose the kind of life I led upon the farm—standing up to my waist in water to see the sheep-washing, and galloping thirty miles before breakfast after strays—was calculated to make a man susceptible to that kind of influence. Anyhow, I fell over head and ears in love with Mary Grover, and wasn't easy in my mind till I'd asked her to be my wife. She hung back at first, but I only loved her the better for her shyness; and when I pressed her hard, she told me in her own pretty words, which were very different from mine, that she didn't want to marry me, because she didn't think she was good enough; her family were a bad lot; her grandfather had been a gentleman, but his descendants had come down somehow; in short, she gave me to understand they were a set of out-and-out scamps, and that she had come to the Antipodes to get out of their way. This did not move me one jot, and I told her so. I wanted to marry her—not her family; and little by little I won her round. She owned that she didn't dislike me; that she liked me a little, because I was strong and brave, she said—dear soul, as if she could know anything about that!—and finally, that she would rather lead a solitary life with me up on the Downs than teach children French verbs and major scales in Hobart Town. After that I wasn't going to waste any more time; so we were married three weeks later, and I took my sweet young wife back to the farm. I had a good wooden house on the station, with a ten-foot verandah all round it, which had been built by Jack Ferguson, my late partner, and I thought it would do for us. But God only knows how it was—whether it was the climate or the lonely life that didn't suit her—my darling drooped and died only two years after our marriage, and just one year after she had given me a little daughter.'

'You should have brought her home,' said the doctor.

'The very thing I wished to do; but she wouldn't have it. She was unhappy even if I spoke of such a thing; she had some insuperable objection to returning to England, and I couldn't bear to vex her, and I didn't know the end was so near. She slipped away from me unawares—like a flower that you've transplanted overnight and find dead in the morning.'

He got up and began to walk up and down the room, deeply moved by this agitating remembrance. Cuthbert watched him curiously. Then a wife was a thing that a man might really care for—not a hollow conventionality.

'I am very sorry for you, Mark,' he said in a friendly tone, still wondering how so big a man could be so distressed by the loss of a woman. 'But you have your daughter left, she must be a comfort to you.' This was a mere mechanical attempt at consolation, Dr. Ollivant not having the faintest idea in what manner a daughter could be a comfort to any man.

'She's the only joy of my life,' answered the other, with a rough energy which contrasted strangely with the doctor's grave tones—musical despite their gravity; for Dr. Ollivant's noble baritone voice was one of his richest gifts.

'And yet you could bring yourself to part with her?' said the doctor, with vague wonder. The whole business was out of his line—part and parcel of that world of the affections whereof he knew nothing, except so much as he had heard of it from his mother's favourite Wordsworth.

'Could I see her droop and die like her mother? That *might* have been climate, though strong men thrive yonder. I could run no such risk with Flora—a pretty name, isn't it? her mother's choice; so I sent her home with a shepherd's wife, when she was two years old. The woman took her straight to my people at Exeter; but before she was seven, my mother died, and my father sent Flora to a boarding-school near London. He died soon after, and there was the little thing friendless, and with strangers. She seemed happy, however, at least her letters told me so—dear little childish letters!—and she remained in the same care until I came home a year ago and took a house in London, and settled down with my little girl—she was seventeen last April—for the rest of my life.' This with a faint sigh.

'And you have lived in London a year without trying to find me out until to-night?' said the doctor, with an injured air.

'You lived twenty years without making any attempt to find me,' replied his friend. 'Shall I tell you what brought me to you, to-night, Cuthbert? It's hardly flattering to the ghost of our boyish friendship—if there's even as much as a ghost left of that!—but I daresay you've found out before now that human nature

is selfish. It was a book you've written that induced me to come to you.'

'A book of mine! I never wrote anything but medical pamphlets.'

'Precisely. What's the name of your book? *On Cardiac Diseases*. That's it, I think. Ever so long before I left Queensland I had reason to suspect there was something not quite right here,'—touching his broad chest,—'the gentlest hill winded me. I had palpitation sometimes, at other times a dull heavy feeling, as if my heart didn't move at all; sleepless nights, languor, a dozen disagreeable symptoms. Finding I couldn't walk as I used to walk, I took it out of myself in hard riding; but this didn't mend matters. I began to think that I was nervous or fanciful, and fought hard against my own sensations.'

'You consulted no medical man?'

'The faculty doesn't abound among our sheep-walks. Besides, I shouldn't have liked to have myself overhauled by a stranger. I thought the voyage home would do me good, and it did. But the home life and this murky atmosphere have played the deuce with me; and, in a few words, I've a notion that I've come pretty near the end of my tether.'

'You've had no doctor in England?'

'No. I suppose the life I led over the water makes a man something of a savage. I've a rooted antipathy to strangers. But as I was reading the *Times* the other day your name caught my eye at the top of a column. Ollivant is not a common name. I remembered that your father was a doctor, and I thought I might as well come and see if the Dr. Ollivant of Wimpole-street was the little fellow I used to save from a licking now and then at Hillersley.'

'My dear old friend,' said the doctor, stretching out his hand to his old schoolfellow with a warmth that was not common to him, 'God grant that the instinct which brought you to me may be an instinct designed to accomplish your cure! The fancied heart-disease is, I daresay, only an effect of the natural depression of mind which your bereavement and your lonely life in Australia were calculated to engender. Change of air, change of scene, new pursuits—'

'Have done nothing for me,' answered the other, with conviction.

Dr. Ollivant looked at his friend for the first time with the searching gaze of the physician. To the keen professional eye that haggard visage, lantern jaws, and faded eyes betokened a shattered constitution, if not organic disease.

'Come to me to-morrow morning,' he said, in his soothing professional tone, and I will make a careful examination. 'I daresay I shall find things a great deal better than you suppose.'

'To-night is as good as to-morrow morning,' answered Mr. Chamney, as coolly as if it were a mere business question that he wanted settled. 'Why not to-night?'

'To-night, if you prefer it. Only I thought you might like to devote this evening to a little friendly talk about old times, and that you'd come up-stairs to the drawing-room and let me present you to my mother.'

'I shall be very glad to know your mother, and to talk about old times. But I'd rather have that other question settled first.'

'So be it then. Just take off your coat and waistcoat, like a good fellow. I'll lock the door, to make sure against interruption.'

The doctor took a stethoscope out of a little drawer near at hand, and began his examination with that quiet professional air which has a certain soothing influence, the air of a man who only requires to ascertain what is wrong in the human machine in order to set it right straightway. His face grew graver as he sounded and listened, graver and more grave as the examination proceeded, till at the end of about ten minutes, which seemed longer to the patient, he lifted his head from Mark Chamney's broad chest with a faint sigh, and put down the stethoscope.

'You find I was right,' said Mr. Chamney, without a break in his voice.

'I fear so.'

'Come, why put it doubtfully like that? You know so.'

'There is disease, I admit,' answered the other cautiously; 'I should do wrong to deny that. But that kind of disease is not always fatal. With care a man may live to a good old age, in spite of organic derangement as bad, perhaps worse, than yours. I have known a man so affected live to eighty, and die at last of bronchitis. You must take care of yourself, Chamney, that's all you have to do.'

And then the doctor proceeded to describe the necessary regimen, a regimen chiefly of deprivation. The patient was to avoid this, not to do the other, and so on; no violent exercise, no excitement, no late hours.

'It's a poor dead-and-alive kind of existence,' said Mr. Chamney, when the doctor had finished; 'and I thought when I came home I should be able to enjoy myself a little; follow the hounds, charter a yacht, and take my little girl about the world—see life, in short. But this puts an end to all those notions. If it were not for Flora's sake I think I'd sooner chance it, and get as much as I can out of life while it lasts. But I haven't a friend in the world that I can count upon for my darling when I'm gone.'

'You may count upon me,' said Dr. Ollivant, 'and upon my mother into the bargain.'

'Do you know I had some idea of that when I came to you to-night, Cuthbert? If he's my Ollivant, and as good a fellow as he promised to be, he might be a friend for my little girl when I'm gone, I said to myself. And your mother is still living, is she? That's comfortable.'

'Yes, and likely to live for many years, thank God,' answered the doctor. 'You must bring your daughter here to-morrow, Mark. I'm a busy man, as you may suppose; but my mother has ample leisure for friendship.'

'I'll bring her. By the bye, there was one thing you did not tell me just now; but it hardly needed telling. With disease of that kind a man would be liable to die at any moment, wouldn't he?'

'Why—yes—in such cases there is always the possibility of sudden death.'

Chapter II.

'Eyes of some men travel far
For the finding of a star;
Up and down the heavens they go,
Men that keep a mighty rout!
I'm as great as they, I trow,
Since the day I found thee out,
Little Flower!'

Mr. Chamney brought his daughter to see Mrs. Ollivant next day, at an hour when the doctor was absent on his daily rounds; but the lady had been fully prepared for the visit, and received her son's friend, and her son's friend's only child, as it were with open arms. She was full of talk about her visitors when Cuthbert came in to dinner at seven o'clock.

'They stayed to luncheon, and were with me more than two hours. I never saw a sweeter girl than Miss Chamney, or Flora, as both she and her father insisted I should call her.'

'Pretty?' asked the doctor rather listlessly, with a man's usual question.

'I hardly know whether you would call her absolutely pretty. Her features would not bear being measured by line and rule; but there is a sweetness, a freshness, a youthful innocence about her that are more winning than beauty. To my mind she is the very incarnation of Wordsworth's Lucy.'

Dr. Ollivant shrugged his shoulders.

'I never had an exalted opinion of Wordsworth's Lucy,' he said; 'a girl who was very well beside the banks of Dove, but would not have been noticeable elsewhere. I like beauty to be brilliant, flashing, something that inspires admiration and awe, like a tropical thunderstorm.'

'Then you will not admire Miss Chamney. But she is a fascinating little thing, for all that.'

'Little!' exclaimed the doctor contemptuously, 'a mere stump of a woman, I suppose, like a lead-pencil cut down.'

'No, she is rather tall than otherwise, but very slim. The most girlish figure—'

'All angles,' muttered the doctor.

'And with a languid kind of grace, like a flower with a slender stem—a narcissus, for instance.'

'Wants tone, I daresay,' said the doctor. 'Well, mother, I can't say that your description inspires me with any ardent desire to make the young lady's acquaintance. However, if you are satisfied that is the grand point; for you will be a much more valuable friend to her than ever I can be. And she will have need of friends when poor Chamney is gone.'

'He looks very ill, Cuthbert. Do you think him in actual danger?'

'I give him a twelvemonth,' answered the doctor.

'Poor fellow! And the poor girl; it is so much worse for her. She seems so fond of him. I never saw such affection between father and daughter.'

'Indeed!' said the doctor, eating his dinner with his usual calmness. He was not by any means heartbroken because the friend of his boyhood had come back to him with the seal of death upon his herculean frame. He was sorry with a temperate sorrow, thought the situation of father and daughter touching, but was accustomed to the tranquil contemplation of touching scenes. And he was prepared to befriend the orphan to the best of his power when her day of bereavement should come, to defend her as her father had defended him when he was a little lonely lad at Hillersley Grammar-school.

He waited for his first leisure day to go and call upon his friend, half in friendship, half professionally; but he meant to take neither fee nor reward from his old schoolfellow. Mr. Chamney had hired for himself a large house in Fitzroy-square, hardly conscious that it was not at the fashionable end of London. It was a broad airy place, and one square seemed to Mark very much like another. It could matter very little to the resident, when his curtains were drawn and his lamps lighted, whether the square were called Fitzroy or Belgrave.

The house had been built on a grander scale than most of the surrounding mansions; the hall was spacious, paved with black and white marble, the staircase wide, the rooms large and lofty. Black marble pillars sustained the dining-room ceiling, the mantelpieces were elaborately carved. It was a house which, with appropriate furniture, might have been made very handsome; but Mr. Chamney

had furnished it sparsely with the mere necessaries of existence, as if it had been a lodge in the wilderness. And he had bought his goods and chattels second-hand, selecting them haphazard at various brokers' shops, as he roamed the lighted streets after nightfall; now a huge sideboard, now a table, now a dozen or so of chairs, or a set of dark, gloomy-looking window-hangings.

To his daughter, who came direct from the bare benches and deal tables of a boarding-school, the house and its appointments appeared splendid; and then the glory of having a house of her own! She told her father that there was something wanting in the drawing-room—it had an empty look compared with Miss Mayduke's drawing-room at Notting-hill. But that sacred chamber was beautified and adorned with the water-coloured landscapes, Berlin-wool chair-covers, wax-fruit and decalcomanie of Miss Mayduke's young ladies, and had only achieved its present perfection in the progress of years. No drawing-room could burst Minerva-like into existence from the brain of an upholsterer.

'I must work you some chair-covers, papa,' said Flora, and immediately bought several pounds of Berlin wool and a dozen yards of canvas. The chair-covers progressed at the rate of a hundred stitches or so per day, and in the mean time the Fitzroy-square drawing-room presented a desert waste of second-hand Turkey carpet, broken by distant islets in the shape of chairs and tables, all alike old-fashioned and irrelevant; a ponderous mahogany loo-table, four ancient ebony chairs with carved backs, six rosewood ditto inlaid with brass, a modern sofa or two, an office-table in the back drawing-room, in which apartment Mr. Chamney wrote his letters and read his newspaper. One spot of brightness redeemed the barren waste; in the centre window of the front drawing-room Miss Chamney had established an aviary,—half a dozen canaries in a big cage, and an Australian parrot in a circular temple of polished brass, dependent from the ceiling. The canaries did not sing much. It seemed as if the atmosphere of Fitzroy-square were not conducive to melody, for the birds had been warranted vocal when Miss Chamney bought them. But they fluttered and chirped in a cheerful manner, and sometimes even essayed a feeble warbling. The Australian stranger made a noise like the creaking of a door, which it repeated at intervals throughout the day, to its own evident satisfaction, as if it found therein an adequate expression of its feelings. The noise was hideous, but the bird was handsome, and that, Miss Chamney said, made amends; one could not expect everything from a bird.

She was standing by the big cage administering to the canaries when Cuthbert Ollivant first saw her. Her father was out when he called, so he had asked to see the young lady herself, unwilling to waste his drive to the regions of Fitzroy—quite out of his beat, which

lay Mayfair way, among narrow streets of small houses, where the fanciful old maiden ladies and the obese old bachelors over-ate and over-drank themselves. He had come up-stairs repeating the poet's lines about the maiden by the banks of Dove, smiling to himself at his mother's sentimentality, being himself in no way given to sentiment. The maid-servant opened the drawing-room door for him, and he went in unannounced, and saw her, Flora Chamney, for the first time, bending down to minister to a languishing canary.

'My mother was right after all,' he said to himself, making up his mind, after his manner, at the first glance. 'She is the sweetest girl I ever saw in my life.'

'Sweet' was an adjective which people applied involuntarily to Flora Chamney. A small oval face, with large gray eyes, dark lashes, dark brows finely pencilled, darkest brown hair which rippled naturally upon the ivory forehead, a long slender throat, a figure slim almost to a fault, perfect hands and feet—in short, a delicately-finished picture rather than a striking one. A gray merino gown, a narrow linen collar, a blue ribbon tied loosely round the throat, were all the aid the picture took from dress; but there was a grace and sweetness about the whole which reminded Cuthbert Ollivant of a Greuse he had once seen sold at Christie and Manson's for eleven hundred pounds sterling—a kit-cat figure of a girl caressing a dove.

He found no difficulty in introducing himself. Flora gave him her hand with a frank smile.

'You can be only one person in the world,' she said; 'for we have no other friends. You must be Dr. Ollivant.'

'Yes, I am Dr. Ollivant. I am very glad you have learned to think of me as a friend.'

'You wouldn't wonder at that if you heard papa talk of you. He is never tired of telling me what a good little fellow you were at Hillersley Grammar-school; and such a prodigy of learning! If he had not said so much of your affection for him, I should have been rather inclined to feel afraid of you.'

'Afraid of me! But why?' he asked, looking at her with a half-wondering admiration, and thinking that if he had married early in life, he too might have had a daughter like this. But then all daughters were not like this.

'Because you are so clever. At Miss Mayduke's'—taking it for granted that he must know all about Miss Mayduke—'I was always afraid of Miss Kilso, who spent her whole existence at the top of the class, and knew the precise date of every event that has ever happened since the Flood, and could do the differential what's-its-name, and hyperboluses and things, and took the first prize every half!'

'Then you don't like clever people?' said the doctor, smiling gently at the hyperboluses.

'I like them very much, when they are nice.'

'Musical, for instance, or artistic?' he suggested, with a consciousness that he was neither of those things.

'Musical people are darlings; and I like artists. There are plenty in this neighbourhood, but we don't know them. There is a young man who lives three doors off who ought to be as clever as Raffaelle; at least, he has hair of the same colour as Raffaelle's, and a Grecian nose.'

'Science, I conclude, is less interesting to you?'

Miss Chamney made a wry face, as at the idea of something nasty.

'That means steam-engines and cotton-looms and things, doesn't it?' she asked, in her winning childish way, which made even her foolish speeches pleasant to hear.

'It means a good deal more than steam-engines sometimes. But one can hardly expect a young lady to be interested in it, any more than one can expect the flowers to know their own Latin names, or be learned in botany. You are fond of birds, I see.'

'I try to make companions of them,' she answered, 'when papa is out. But I find it rather uphill work. They put their heads on one side and chirp when I talk to them, but we don't get beyond that. I really think the parrot has the most intellect, though his note is not musical.'

The Australian, which had creaked intermittently throughout the conversation, creaked his loudest at this, as if in approval.

'I have given them the names of my favourite heroes,' said Flora, looking at her canaries, 'but I am afraid they are not very sure of their identity. That little fat one with the topknot is the Vicar of Wakefield; the one with a black wing is Hamlet; that little perky bird is David Copperfield; that bright yellow one is the Prince who found the Sleeping Beauty in the wood. I don't think he had any name in the story, had he?' she asked, appealing to the doctor, as if his recollections of nursery lore were of the freshest, 'so I have called him Prince Lovely. The others are all fairy-tale princes.'

'And have you no one besides your birds when your father is away?'

'No one. Papa's old friends—people he knew when he was a boy, that is to say—are all Devonshire people, and he says he doesn't care about hunting them up, not having been particularly fond of them in his boyhood. There are my old schoolfellows; and papa told me if I wanted any companions I could have them. But when I went to see Miss Mayduke six months ago, all my favourites had left, and I hadn't the courage to go to their own homes in search of them. I should have had to see their papas and mammas, and—I daresay it's very foolish, but I have such a horror of strangers.'

'Yet you hardly seemed to be horrified by me when I came in just now unannounced.'

'O, that's quite different; papa has talked so much about you, and your mother was so kind to me the other day, you seem like an old friend.'

'I hope I may never seem any less.'

'And it is such a comfort to me to think that you are a doctor, and can take care of papa's health. He has not been very well lately. But you will keep him well, won't you?'

'I will do all that science can do to keep him well,' answered the doctor gravely.

'Can science do that? Then I shall love science with all my heart. How stupid of me to forget just now that medicine is a science! And I have always thought medicine one of the grandest things in the world.'

'Really?'

'What can be grander than the art of saving people's lives? I reverence a great physician.'

The doctor was curiously touched by this avowal—sweet flattery from those childish lips.

'It would have been worth my while to undergo all the pains and penalties of marriage if I could have had such a daughter,' he thought.

The short winter's day—one of the first days in December—was closing. The fire had burned low, neglected by Flora in her devotion to the canaries; the lamplight from below flashed here and there upon the bare walls; the room looked big and dark and empty—a gloomy home for so fair a creature.

'I should have made her surroundings ever so much brighter if she had been my daughter,' thought the doctor.

'You must find life rather dreary in this big house, when your father is away?' he said.

'No,' she answered, with a smile that brightened all her face in the twilight; 'I have never known what it is to be dull. First and foremost, I am so happy in the thought that papa has come back to me for ever.'

'Unstable happiness,' thought the doctor. 'Brief for ever.'

'And then, even when papa is out—though I am always sorry to lose him even for so short a time—I am able to amuse myself. I have a piano in my room up-stairs, and my paint-box.'

'You paint, then?' asked the doctor, himself the most unaccomplished of men, and wondering how many accomplishments might go to the sum total of an educated young woman.

'I spoil a good deal of paper; but it's so nice being near Rathbone-place; one can always get more, and moist colours in little tubes that squirt out. It's enchantment to work with them.'

'I should like to see some of your paintings.'

'I shall be very pleased to show you the first I finish,' answered Flora doubtfully; 'but they don't very often come to that. They look beautiful at first, and I feel I really am getting on; and then somehow they go wrong, and after they've once taken the turn, the harder I work at them the worse they go.'

'Landscapes or figures?'

'O, either. I've been doing the human figure lately—a nymph at a fountain—in chalks; but chalks are so dirty, and the human figure is rather uninteresting without clothes. Hark! that's papa's knock.'

It was; and Mark Chamney came striding up the stairs presently, and burst into the drawing-room, out of breath, but looking big enough and strong enough to defy the destroyer Death. But it was only the large outline left of the once herculean form; the clothes hung loose upon the shrunken figure.

'That's right,' he said, pleased at finding those two together. 'Then you two have contrived to make friends without me?'

'We were friends already,' answered Flora; 'for I knew how you liked Dr. Ollivant.'

'You'll stop to dinner, of course?' said Mark; 'and Flora shall sing to us while we drink our wine.'

The doctor hesitated. He was a reading man, and his quiet evenings were very precious to him. His mother would wait dinner for him. No, that might be avoided, for his brougham was below, and he could send the man home with a message. But she would be not the less disappointed; he so rarely dined away from her. Duty and reason cried 'Dine in Wimpole-street,' but the voice of inclination drowned them, and he stayed where he was.

'I never take wine after dinner,' he said; 'but I'll stay to hear Miss Chamney sing.'

Chapter III.

'It seems to me that the coming of love is like the coming of spring—the date is not to be reckoned by the calendar. It may be slow and gradual; it may be quick and sudden. But in the morning, when we wake and recognise a change in the world without, verdure on the trees, blossoms on the sward, warmth in the sunshine, music in the air, then we say Spring has come!'

The young man whom Miss Chamney had observed from her window occasionally—her neighbour at the distance of three doors—was an art-student—not a student of the plodding, drudging order; for the young man had the misfortune to be rich, and it mattered very little to him, from a prudential point of view, whether he were industrious or idle. But as he had a passion for art in the abstract,

and an ambitious desire to win a name in the list of modern painters, he worked, or seemed to work, furiously. He was, however, somewhat spasmodic in the manner of his toil, and, like Flora, was apt to find the finish of a picture harder work than the beginning. Like Miss Chamney, he discovered human anatomy taken by itself, without the adventitious charm of raiment, to be a dryasdust business; that the human skeleton with its various bones is not altogether satisfying to the imagination; that the prolonged study of limbs unconnected with bodies, however various in the development of their muscles, is apt to pall upon the ardent spirit.

'I suppose Rubens did this kind of thing,' said this Mr. Leyburne, after a hard day's work in a private life school, not very far from Fitzroy-square. 'He could never have done that foreshortening of the dead Christ in the Antwerp Museum if he hadn't gone in his hardest for anatomy. But, O, how I wish I were through it all, and at work upon my first historical picture! It does seem such bosh, sometimes, these everlasting fists and elbows and knee-joints. It isn't as if I meant to make my reputation in half-naked Greeks and Romans, Jason and the Golden Fleece, Theseus and Ariadne, Horatius what's-his-name, and that kind of stuff. If ever I grope my way farther back into the mist of ages than the Spanish Armada, may I be convicted of half a column of anachronisms by the *Times* critic. No, Mary Stuart and Bothwell, the murder of the Regent Moray, from a window in Linlithgow,—that's the kind of thing for my money.'

Thus spoke Walter Leyburne, half in soliloquy, half in confidence, to his fellow-students, as he shut his day's work in his portfolio, and prepared to take his homeward way. A bright-looking young fellow, nay, handsome, and with an expression that was radiant as a summer morning; blue eyes; straight Greek nose; light auburn moustache, with drooping ends, sedulously trained, only half concealing a somewhat feminine mouth; auburn hair, worn long in the Raffaelle fashion, artistic suit of black velvet, boots which would not have disgraced a club in Pall Mall, long supple white hands without gloves, a sprig of stephanotis in his buttonhole, a black-velvet Glengarry in place of the regulation chimney-pot,—a curious admixture of Bohemianism and foppery in his costume.

This was the gentleman whom Flora had occasion to remark once or twice a day from her window. She might have seen him half-a-dozen times a day had she kept watch for him, his erratic habits causing him to tramp backwards and forwards between his lodgings and the outer world a good deal more often than was necessary to his artistic pursuits. He had chums and companions in arts scattered about the neighbourhood, and when seized by an original idea, would fling on his Scotch bonnet and rush forth to impart his inspiration to the ear of sympathy. He had appoint-

ments for friendly oyster-luncheons, or bitter-beer and sandwiches at a tavern in Rathbone-place, or he wanted something in the artist's-colour way in that district. Thus he was always flitting to and fro, on some pretence or other. He went every night to a theatre or some other place of amusement, to hear the 'Chough and Crow' and eat welsh-rarebits at Evans's, to play billiards at a public table; and he came home after midnight in a hansom cab, whose doors he flung asunder with a shameless bang. Flora's bower was in the front of the house, so she was wont to hear these post-midnight returns, and this young man's cheery voice chaffing the cabmen. He appeared to pay these functionaries with a lavish generosity, for there were never any complainings or remonstrances, only an interchange of witticisms and friendly good-nights.

It must be a wild, wicked kind of life, thought Flora; and yet the art-student seemed rather an amiable young man. Was there no one—no near relation—father, mother, uncle, aunt, or sister to check this headlong career, no restraining influence to snatch such a good-looking young man from perdition? Flora was really sorry for him.

She was overwhelmed with astonishment when her father came home from the City—he paid occasional visits to that mysterious region—and rubbed his great hands cheerily, exclaiming,

'Flora, I have made an acquaintance. Our circle is widening. If we go on in this way I must get you a brougham to take you out when you pay visits. Only, unfortunately, this is a young man with nobody belonging to him, so far as I can make out.'

'A young man, papa!' said Flora. 'Who can that be? A younger brother of Dr. Ollivant's?'

'Ollivant never had such a thing as a brother. You must try a little nearer home, Flo. What should you say to that young man in the black-velvet jacket—the young man you've teased me about so often—making me get out of my easy-chair with "Be quick, pa, he's just turning the corner; *do* look"?'

'Why, papa, you don't mean that you could go up to him in the street and ask him to be friends with you?' cried Flora, blushing to the roots of her hair at the mere thought of such an outrage of the proprieties, as taught without extra charge by Miss Mayduke, of Notting Hill.

'Not exactly. But what do you think of that young man being intimately connected—indirectly—with my past life?'

Flora shook her head resolutely.

'It couldn't be, papa. It would be too ridiculous.'

'I don't see that. Why ridiculous? Because he wears a black-velvet coat, or because you've noticed him from your window?'

'But what do you mean, and what can he have to do with your past life? It isn't as if you were a painter.'

'His uncle wasn't a painter, Flo; but he was my employer, and afterwards my partner in Queensland. He married early in life, but had neither chick nor child, as you've heard me say.'

Flora nodded. She had heard her father relate his Australian adventures very often indeed, but was never tired of hearing them.

'And when he died all his money went to his only sister's only son. He left it to the sister, and her heirs, executors, and assigns, not knowing that she was dead and gone when he made his will. He had never taken the trouble to send her a ten-pound note, or to inquire if she wanted one, and died leaving her sixty thousand pounds.'

'But what has all that to do with the young painter who lives three doors off?' asked Flora, puzzled.

'Only that he is the nephew who inherited the sixty thousand pounds.'

'Good gracious!' exclaimed Flora with a disappointed air; 'and I thought he was a struggling artist who would have to commit suicide by and by if he couldn't sell his pictures. That accounts for his conduct to the cabmen.'

'What conduct? What cabmen?'

Flora explained.

'And do you mean to say you have made his acquaintance, papa?' she asked afterwards.

'By the merest accident. When I came home I put a little money—only a few odd thousands—into shipping, as you know—never had a secret from you, my darling. I went down to John Maravilla's office—he's the agent, you know—this morning to make an inquiry or two, and who should I see but our friend in the velvet jacket—he had dressed himself more like a Christian to come into the City, but I knew him by his long hair—lounging across Maravilla's desk asking questions about ships and shipping. Maravilla, who was rattling on in his usual way, chuckling as if he had made half a million of money since breakfast, introduced us. "You ought to know Mr. Leyburne," he said; "he has a sixteenth in the Sir Galahad." "I ought to know the name of Leyburne," said I, "ships or no ships. Had you ever anybody belonging to you called Ferguson?" "I'm happy to say I had," answered the young man with the long hair; "for if I hadn't, I should never have had a share in Sir Galahad. My uncle, John Ferguson, left me all his money." "He was my first and only employer, and best friend," said I; and we were on the most intimate terms in less than five minutes; and he's going to dine with us this evening.'

'Papa!' cried Flora, with a little joyous burst.

'What, you're pleased, are you, missy?' said the father thoughtfully.

'I doat upon painters, papa, and he looks cleverer than the others who live about here.'

'He has the interest of sixty thousand pounds to pay for his fine clothes, my dear, unless he has contrived to fritter away any of the principal. Yes, he's coming at seven o'clock this evening. I thought we ought to be civil to him for the sake of his poor old uncle, who was a good friend to me in spite of the brandy-bottle.'

'Of course, papa, it's the least we can do to be kind to him, and perhaps he'll help me a little with my painting. I'm copying a study called "Gulnare," with long plaits and the dearest little Greek cap, but the flesh tints will come so very purple in the shadows, as if poor Gulnare had been taking nitrate of silver. Perhaps Mr. Leyburne—rather a pretty name, isn't it?—could tell me how to improve my flesh tints.'

'Perhaps,' said her father absently. 'Strange, isn't it, missy, that I should come across this young fellow? When I hunted up Cuthbert Ollivant, I thought he was the only friend I had or was ever likely to have in the world, and now this young man seems as if he were a kind of nephew of mine.'

'Of course he must be, since he is Mr. Ferguson's nephew, and Mr. Ferguson made your fortune. But, O, papa,' cried Flora, shaking her head solemnly, 'I'm afraid he's rather a wicked young man.'

'How do you mean wicked, Baby?'

This was a favourite pet name for Flora. As he had called her Baby and thought of her as Baby in the far-away Australian days, so it best pleased Mark Chamney to call her Baby now.

'Wild, papa—dreadfully dissipated. He comes home late every night, in hansom cabs, and it's ever so much wickeder to ride in a hansom than a four-wheeler, papa, isn't it? Mrs. Gage told me so. "Hansom cabs and wildness go together, Miss Flora," she said.'

Mrs. Gage was a mysterious female—elderly, lachrymose, and had seen better days—whom Mr. Chamney had picked up for his housekeeper.

'Never mind Mrs. Gage. I hope there's no harm in that young fellow, in spite of his late hours. I should be sorry to think it, for there's something frank and pleasant in his manner, and I shouldn't have asked him here if I thought he was dissipated.'

'Perhaps twelve o'clock or a quarter past isn't so *very* late, papa?' said Flora thoughtfully.

'You're very exact, Baby.'

'I can't help hearing him, papa—just under my window, as it were.'

Flora was in quite a flutter of excitement all the afternoon. They had positively no friends except Dr. and Mrs. Ollivant. It was quite a wonder for them to expect any one to dinner. She made her father take her to Covent Garden to buy fruit for des-

sert, and chose bananas and pomegranates and prickly pears, and divers other recondite productions of nature, all of which belied their good looks and were flavourless to the palate. But it was her childish fancy to adorn the table with something uncommon—picturesque, even—which might charm the painter's eye by its novel form and colour. Mrs. Gage had been bidden to prepare a good dinner, but as that worthy woman's mind never soared above oxtail soup and cod's head and shoulders, roast beef and boiled fowls, there was no such thing as originality to be hoped for from her.

'I don't suppose he cares very much what he eats,' thought Flora, who had fixed ideas upon the subject of this young man. 'He looks superior to that. But, O, I hope he won't drink a great deal and get horribly tipsy, so that papa will never ask him again.'

This idea was dreadful. But what can one expect from a young man who comes home late in a hansom?

There was an interval between the return from Covent Garden, laden with those curious products of the tropics, and seven o'clock. Flora devoted this time to arranging and rearranging her drawings, undecided which she should venture to show Mr. Leyburne. She must show him one of them, or how could she hope for any enlightening counsel upon the subject of flesh tints? But seen in the light of her new timidity, they all appeared too bad to exhibit. Juliet's mouth was out of drawing; Gulnare's left eye had a decidedly intoxicated look; an old man with a white beard—a study of 'Benevolence'—was more purple by candlelight than she could have supposed possible. A group of camellias had been obviously copied from originals—cut out of turnips; a vase of fuschia was painfully suggestive of pickled cabbage. Flora shut her portfolio in despair.

'I'd better show him all of them, and then he'll know what a miserable dauber I am,' she said to herself. 'How I wish he were poor, so that it would be a charity to take lessons of him!' And then she ran into the next room to dress; shook down the wealth of her dark rippling hair, and rolled it up again in the most bewitching manner imaginable—one broad massive plait twisted round the small head like a diadem; and put on a blue-silk dress—the dress her father had praised so often—rich lace encircling the graceful throat, loose sleeves half revealing the soft round arms. She had unlimited money to spend upon finery, and indulged her girlish fancy with all manner of prettinesses, lockets, ribbons, and laces—all the things she had longed for in her school-days.

The dingy maroon curtains were drawn and big fires burning in the two drawing-rooms, whereby those apartments had almost a cheerful look despite their bareness. Mark Chamney was seated in his favourite arm-chair, hard as a brickbat but capacious, with his legs extended across the [illegible] his accustomed attitude, reading the evening paper.

'Can't think what the deuce men find to amuse them in the papers,' he said.

'That's what you always say, papa; yet you never read anything else.'

'I can't say I care about books, Baby. I like to know that what I'm reading is the last thing I could read. What's the good of history, for instance? this week falsifies last week. I don't care about knowing what has been—I only want to know what is. How smart you've made yourself, missy! You don't often favour *me* with the sight of that blue gown.'

'I thought, as we had company, papa—'

'Company! the young man from next door but three! That's his knock, I daresay.'

Flora's heart gave a little flutter. She was thinking of those dreadful daubs up-stairs, and wondering whether she would ever muster courage to exhibit them—wondering a little too what this young painter, of whom she had only caught flying glimpses at a distance, would be like when she saw him face to face.

He came into the room while she was wondering, was introduced to her, and shook hands with her in a rapid easy manner that was not ungentlemanlike.

He was certainly good-looking, of that there could be no doubt; handsome even; faultlessly arrayed in evening-dress. The only eccentricity in his appearance was the long fair hair. Flora had expected to see him in his black-velvet coat, with perhaps a smear of paint here and there to show that he had only just laid aside his palette, and, behold, he was dressed like any other young man, spotless, irreproachable. Flora was almost disappointed.

He was the easiest young man in the world to get on with, his communicative disposition serving as a key wherewith to open the doors of friendship's temple. He told them all about himself; his longings, his aspirations, his intention of going to Rome by and by for a year or two, to work hard; as if there were something in the air of that eternal city which must needs make him industrious.

He asked a great many questions about his departed uncle, whom he had never seen, and the strange life among the lonely sheep-walks, and thus drew Mark Chamney on to talk confidentially, and to tell his longest stories. Altogether it was a most cheerful dinner-party, much more cheerful than when Dr. Ollivant had dined with them; Dr. Ollivant, although far better informed, not being so good a talker as Walter Leyburne.

After the dessert, which was a success, in spite of the spikiness and stringiness of the tropical fruits, they went up-stairs together. It had been an extreme relief to Flora to perceive that the painter drank nothing but a tumbler of claret throughout his repast. He was not therefore prone to intemperance, which she imagined a com-

mon vice among men of genius who came home after midnight. It was so nice, too, to find him eager to drink the tea she poured out for him presently, just as if he had been the most correctly-minded of the curate species.

He caught sight of the open piano while he was sipping his tea, and brightened visibly.

'You play and sing,' he said. 'I thought as much.'

'Only easy music,' she answered shyly; 'little bits of Mendelssohn, where the accidentals are not too dreadful, and old songs that papa likes. I have a book full—dear old things, that belonged to poor mamma. I am afraid you would laugh at the very look of them—such faded notes and common-looking paper; but they seem to me prettier than any I can buy at the music-sellers'.'

'I am sure they are pretty,' replied Walter with enthusiasm; 'or you would not sing them.'

'His manner to girls in general, no doubt,' thought Flora.

She went to the piano at her father's bidding, and sang one after another of the old ballads her mother had loved, the tender plaintive music of years gone by—'We met,' and 'She wore a wreath of roses,' 'Young Love lived once in a humble shed,' and 'The light guitar;' while Walter Leyburne hung over the piano enchanted, and looked and listened—there were no leaves to turn, for Flora played from memory—and fancied that his hour was come; that Destiny, which had done pretty well for him by flinging sixty thousand pounds into his lap, desired to bestow upon him this still higher boon, for the perfection and completion of his lot.

Mark Chamney lay back in his armchair, smoking—tobacco had been the chief solace of his lonely life on the other side of the world, and it was not to be supposed that his little girl would deny him the comfort of his pipe wheresoever he chose to enjoy it—and watching the two figures at the piano.

The young man seemed all that youth should be—candid, generous, ardent. It was a curious hazard that had made them neighbours. It seemed something more than hazard which had created these two young creatures so near of an age, and with so many fancies and attributes in common.

'It would seem almost the natural course of events, if—' thought Mr. Chamney, and did not take the trouble to finish the sentence in his own mind, the conclusion being so obvious.

After having dutifully sung her father's favourite ballads, Flora ventured to speak, with extreme shyness and faltering, about painting.

'I'm afraid it is very difficult to paint,' she said, in a speculative way, still perched upon the music-stool, looking down at the keyboard and fingering the black notes dumbly, as if seeking inspiration from sharps and flats. 'I [illegible] like Raffaelle, or Titian, or any of those—'

'Heavy swells,' interjected Walter, seeing her at a loss.

She laughed a little at this, and grew a shade bolder.

'But just tolerably, to amuse oneself.'

'Why, then, you paint!' cried the young man, enraptured.

'I didn't say that.'

'O, yes, you did. Pray do show me what you have done.'

'They're so horrid,' pleaded Flora.

'No, they are beautiful, equal to Rosa Bonheur's.'

'O, no, no. And they are not animals.'

'I insist on your showing them to me this moment.'

Her father rang the bell, and ordered Miss Chamney's portfolio. There was no time for reflection. Before she could collect her senses, the book was open on the table, and Walter Leyburne was looking over the drawings, with little muttered exclamations, and frownings, and smilings.

'Upon my word there's a good deal of talent in them,' he said, cheerily, and then began to show what was wrong, where the drawing was out, or the brush had been used too heavily.

'You shouldn't have been in such a hurry to go into colour,' he said, at which Flora despaired; for what is life worth to the artistic mind of seventeen if one cannot dabble with colours?

'Drawing is such dry work,' she exclaimed, raising her pretty eyebrows.

'Not if you go into it thoroughly,' replied Mr. Leyburne, forgetting sundry expressions of disgust and impatience that had fallen from his own lips a few days ago in relation to the muscles of a gladiator. 'I wish your papa would let me come in now and then for half-an-hour, and put you on the right tack; and I could lend you some casts to copy. You ought to draw from the round.'

Flora beamed with smiles, but looked at her father doubtfully.

'I don't see any objection,' said Mr. Chamney; 'name your time, and I'll be here to see that Baby is an obedient pupil.'

The business was settled on the spot, and a farther arrangement made, to the effect that Mr. and Miss Chamney were to inspect Mr. Leyburne's studio next day.

'It might amuse you to see a hard-working man's painting-room,' said Walter, with extreme pride in the epithet 'hard-working.' 'And if you will do me the honour to lunch with me, I'll make things as comfortable as a miserable dog of a bachelor can ever hope to make them.'

This with extreme scorn of his condition, as if he were the most abandoned of earth's inhabitants.

Flora clasped her hands joyously. 'O, papa, do let us go!' she cried; 'I never saw a painter's studio in all my life.'

Whereupon the invitation was accepted, Mr. Chamney desiring nothing better than to be led by the light hand of his little girl.

FORECAST SHADOW OF DEATH

SHAKESPEARE was not merely drawing upon his imagination—an imagination, however, no draft upon which but was safe to be honoured—when he made Griffith, in detailing to Queen Katharine the particulars of Wolsey's last sickness, relate the circumstance of the cardinal's forecast touching the very hour of his decease. Arrested at York, arriving by easy stages at Leicester, too ill to sit his mule, the great churchman lodged in the abbey of the latter town; responding to the welcome of abbot and brethren in words that every one remembers; and then straightway

> 'to bed; where eagerly his sickness
> Pursued him still; and three nights after this,
> About the hour of eight (which he himself
> Foretold should be his last),'

he slept in peace; slept the sleep that knows not waking; after life's fitful fever, slept so well.

Cavendish's Narrative appears to have been the authority for Shakespeare's reference. It was on the morning before his death that Wolsey said to Cavendish, as he stood by his bedside, 'about eight of the clock,' the windows being close shut, and wax lights burning upon the cupboard, and the sick man perceiving his friend's 'shadow upon the wall by the bedside,' behind which shadow there loomed to dying eyes another shadow,—'What is it of the clock?' 'Sir,' said Cavendish, 'it is past eight in the morning.' 'Eight of the clock?' quoth he, 'that cannot be;' rehearsing divers times, 'eight of the clock! eight of the clock! nay, nay,' quoth he at last, 'it cannot be eight of the clock, for by eight of the clock shall you lose your master; for my time draweth near, that I must depart this world.' Several pages of the narrative are taken up with the details of what intervened between that statement and the cardinal's actual decease. When it came to the last, writes Cavendish, 'we caused the yeomen of the guard to stand by secretly to see him die, and to be witness of his words at his departure, who heard all his said communication; and incontinent the clock struck eight, and then gave he up the ghost, and thus he departed this present life. And calling to remembrance how he said the day before, that at eight of the clock we should lose our master, as it is before rehearsed, one of us looking upon another, supposing that either he knew or prophesied of his departure, yet before his departure, we sent for the abbot of the house to annoyle him,' &c.

That 'victim of superstition,' as Dean Merivale calls him, th

Emperor Domitian, had long before his death, it was said, penetrated futurity, and ascertained too surely the day, the hour which was to prove fatal to him, besides learning that he was to die by the sword. If Burton, the Anatomist of Melancholy, who believed in judicial astrology, foretold correctly the exact period of his death, from a calculation of his nativity, the event occurred not without notorious suspicion of its having been occasioned by his own hand. Bentley's forecast of his fourscore years, and there an end, is referred to by Mr. de Quincey as, if authentic, a remarkable instance of 'that unaccountable spirit of divination which has haunted some people.' Lord Nelson, for instance, in the obstinate prediction before his final victory, that the 21st of October would be his day. And, talking of obstinate predictions, what the late Sir Archibald Alison tells us of Napoleon the Great surely deserves to be ranked among them, inasmuch as the emperor 'frequently said that he would die of cancer in the stomach before he was fifty.' Wilful man, if so; but then we have his prediction in Scotch, and that is apt to put 'will' for 'shall,' and 'would' for 'should.'

Baronius tells how the death of the Emperor Anastasius was revealed to a saint at a great distance, who communicated the awful fact to three of his brethren (A.D. 518), intimating at the same time that he himself was summoned to appear before the tribunal of God within ten days, to bear witness against the emperor. 'This Elias,' as Dean Milman styles him, 'departed before the end of ten days on his charitable errand, so necessary to enlighten Omniscience as to the deeds of a mortal man.' Gibbon relates with his mildest sneer the story of Cyprian's dream, that he should be put to death the next day, whereas a year's exile intervened. 'The event made it necessary to explain that word [next *day*] as signifying a year.' Schleiermacher, in one of his letters, quotes from recent experience what he calls 'another example of their inexplicable foreboding of death, which is often met with in persons who neither devote much attention to their physical state, nor are otherwise prone to yield themselves up to previsions of the future. Can you,' he asks his correspondent, 'at all understand this feeling or its origin?' Wordsworth touches on this particular section of the general subject of presentiments:

> 'Tis said that warnings ye dispense,
> Embolden'd by a keener sense;
> That men have lived for whom,
> With dread precision, ye made clear
> The hour that in a distant year
> Should knell them to the tomb.'

But who keeps count of the unfulfilled prophecies? Chateaubriand mentions Madame de Beaumont's conviction that her last day was to be November 2d, which it was not. Jerome Cardan

was commonly believed to have wilfully starved himself to death, that he might not outlive the day he had oracularly foretold. There is a grotesque story told by Colman of Bonnell Thornton's last hours: how he assured the bystanders that he should infallibly expire before he had counted twenty; and how, covering his head with the bedclothes, he began to count 'one, two' on to twenty, and then thrust out his head, with a profane exclamation, how very odd it was the figures were wrong. Washington Irving, in his old age, writes to a friend whose account of the 'firm presentiment' on the part of a common acquaintance, that he should close his career on his birthday, and of the calm serenity with which he awaited it, the writer calls 'really touching and beautiful.' But one of the paragraphs of a subsequent letter opens with the congratulation (or should it be condolence?), 'I am glad to find also that Mr. Gray continues to falsify his predictions, and to grow fat and hearty in spite of himself.' Mr. Douglas Jerrold is said to have had a conviction, belied by the event, that he should die at midnight.

At daybreak on the 16th of November 1824—the day that Lewis XVIII. had himself indicated as the *terminus ad quem* of his vital powers—his majesty's first physician drew aside the bedcurtain and felt the royal pulse, or rather felt for it,—for pulsation had ceased; and M. Portal turned round to the company with the significant formula, *Messieurs, le roi est mort;* in the same breath uttering his *Vive le roi!* with a bow to the Count of Artois, now Charles X.

Philip van Artevelde is indulging in no flight of fancy and taking no sort of poetical license, but is simply prosaical, though with a dash of irony in his prosaics, when he avers that

> 'Sooner or later, something, it is certain,
> Must bring men to their graves. Our every act
> Is death's forerunner. It is but the date
> That puzzles us to fix.'

To have seemed, by haphazard guess or what not, to solve the puzzle, gives a corresponding distinction to the note-worthies on record who have fixed the date, and whose forecast the event has been said to verify.

When the clock struck three on the Sunday morning of November 18, 1624, Jacob Böhme exclaimed, 'Three hours hence is my time;' and at six, they tell us, he fetched a deep sigh and departed. The foremost of living poets has commemorated the prediction of St. Simeon Stylites, when calling from the top of his column for a priest to come and lean a ladder on the shaft, and climb up into the saint's airy house, and deliver him the blessed sacrament:

> 'For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,
> I prophesy that I shall die to-night
> A quarter before twelve.'

Skovorodà, the eloquent preacher and peacemaker of the Ukraine, dying at the age of forty-eight, is alleged to have foretold his death the day before it occurred, as well as to have dug his own grave in the garden, unwilling to give this last trouble to the friends to whom he thought he had long enough been a burden.

Wodrow, in his *Analecta*, cites the instance of a 'Mr. Robert Paton, minister at Barnweel,' who had 'a particular fore-notice, seven or eight years before, of his death.' And the same diligent chronicler, not to say snapper-up of unconsidered trifles, relates in his Correspondence the case of one Henderson, in which the notice was much shorter, but 'all fell out as he had foretold.'

Cromwell ought to have been able to foretell with preternatural precision the day of his decease, if one may credit a story told by Echard, to the following effect: That on the morning of the battle of Worcester, the general went with Colonel Lindsay into a wood-side not far from the army, and advancing to some distance, met a grave elderly man, with a roll of parchment, on receiving which, Cromwell exclaimed, in the colonel's hearing, 'This is but for seven years; I was to have had it for twenty-one.' The old gentleman peremptorily declared that it could not be for any longer time than seven. Cromwell then took the parchment, and exultingly cried, 'Now, Lindsay, the battle is our own!' Worcester, which he was wont to call his 'crowning mercy,' was fought on September the 3d, 1651, and certain it is that the Protector died on September the 3d, 1658, the exact termination of his seven years' lease. But what else is certain in this uncanny legend let those determine who will or can.

When Erasmus returned in 1536 to Basle, it was only to die. An attack of dysentery brought him low, and he predicted the very day of his death. Witty, lively, studious, and patient he continued to the last. 'A few days before he died,' says one biographer, 'when his three friends, Froben, Amberbach, and Episcopius, entered his room, he compared them to the three friends of Job, and asked why their garments were not rent, and their heads sprinkled with ashes. He retained his reason to the last moment, praying to Christ, and to Christ only, and passed away about midnight on the 11th of July.' So that whether it had been the 11th or 12th of that month which he foretold as the day of his departure, the prediction would be nearly enough fulfilled.

John O'Keeffe, in his Recollections, tells a queer story of his sitting at home, at nine years of age, drawing a tombstone, upon which he had written, 'Here lies the body of ——,' and was cudgelling his brains for a name, when there stepped into the room a robust shoemaker, of county Wexford, with a pair of new shoes for the boy's father; 'a very honest fellow—in health and person remarkably well-looking, strong, tall, and athletic.' His name being

Paddy Furlong, Master John took the liberty of forthwith inscribing on the tombstone, 'Patrick Furlong.' Patrick had been looking over his shoulder, and admiring the drawing, but was visibly taken aback a little when he saw the deliberate addition of his own name. 'With the thoughtlessness of childhood,' so O'Keeffe goes on to say, 'I went on writing, "who died on the —:" here I was at another stand; when the Wexford shoemaker said to me, "on the 2d of September—put down that." I did so. "One thousand seven hundred and fifty-six—put down that." I complied, and away he went. About a week after, we heard he was ill, and dangerously so; and in a few weeks more, we were told that he had died on the 2d of September, the very day he himself had desired me to write on the tombstone.'

Mr. Dickens adverts to the 'singular instances' we have all heard and read of, in which a presentiment of death at a particular day, or even minute, has been entertained and realised; all such anecdotes, however, being of persons who have been troubled with a foreboding of their own death; whereas the case he has to deal with involves the death of another, and thereby hangs a tale. Captain Marryat makes his Captain Kearney foretell the very day of his decease, and duly vindicate prevision and prediction by the accomplished fact. Arthur Lamont, in *Margaret Denzil's History*, tells the sister of charity he's a dying man; and to her professional reply, as a soothing platitude, that every man in the army is also a dying man, he rejoins, 'Ah, yes, but a good many of them will go home to a fond welcome first. I am going to die—I know when; in eight hours, say; and that makes a difference, my sister.' When Sister Agnes tells Sister Margaret the story of his end, we come upon this query and reply: 'And Lamont died?' 'He died, Margaret, just before the end of the eighth hour he had prophesied.'

Mrs. Thrale begins one of her sprightly old ladylike epistles to Sir James Fellowes, with the announcement, 'Poor Callan, the upholsterer, my landlady in Westgate-street [Bath], went perfectly well to bed, called up her daughter at four o'clock, Mrs. Booth, told her she should die in half an hour, and kept her word to a second.'

George Alexander Stevens, once famous for his convivial songs, and for those 'lectures on heads' which were successfully followed up by Lee Lewes, is said to have foretold the exact time of his dissolution, and to have kept his word. Mr. Boaden records the circumstance in his *Life of Kemble*, without allowing that any such coincidence must have been the result of any particular illumination; for, as he says, we notice the few previsions of this sort that come true, and pass over the myriads which the event disproves. But he suggests that, in the close of a fevered and irregular existence, the very conceit of the mind may tend to 'rob the treasury of life.' Elsewhere this author adverts to the foreboding which, as he

words it, 'attended the Princess Amelia,' who uniformly expressed her belief that the month of October would be fatal to her, as it was; and his remark again is, that such a man as Sir Kenelm Digby would have recognised a perhaps necessary issue in such cases, whereas the scepticism of the modern philosopher leads him solely to consider how far such prepossessions, solemnly entertained, may enfeeble the frame, and thus contribute to their own fulfilment. As a popular French author says, a thousand facts prove, not only that vigour of character and moral energy may often struggle successfully against disease, and triumph over the most desperate symptoms, but that men of timid imaginations and cowardly minds often die from the mere dread of dying. The Emperor Severus wished so impatiently for death that, says Gibbon, he 'hastened the instant of it by his impatience.' Madame de Coislin's deathbed had for one of its very French 'assistants' a paradoxical personage who very confidently affirmed, that when it came to the last, people only sunk because they allowed themselves to do so; and that if one kept one's mind on the alert, and never for a moment lost sight of the approaching enemy, one need not, would not die at all. 'I believe it,' quoth madame, now a very foolish fond old dame, fourscore and upwards; 'I believe it, but I fear that something will happen to take off my attention.' Apparently something did. At any rate the last enemy was one too many for her. In vain the old lady and her assistants had, like the kinsfolk of Elaine,

> 'deemed her death
> Was rather in the fantasy than the blow.'

But as the Professor at the Breakfast-table complains, there is a very great tendency to make capital of various kinds out of dying men's speeches; for which purpose the lies that have been put into their mouths are, indeed, endless.

Southey, in 'The Doctor,' cites approvingly the story told by Felix Faber, the monk of Ulm, of a lovely child who, in her twelfth year, died of the plague in the fourteenth century, and enforced her deathbed revelations by asserting, in token of their truth, that her own death would take place that night, and her father die on the third day following; she then pointed to seven persons, foretelling to each the day of their decease, and named some others who were not present, who would, in like manner, be cut off by the plague, saying at what time each of them would expire; and in every instance, according to the legend, the prediction was punctually fulfilled. This is a tale which, in Southey's judgment, may in all its parts be true; for such predictions, at such a time when whole cities were almost depopulated by the pestilence, 'were likely not only to be verified, but in a great degree to bring about their own verification.' We may interpret in this sense what we read of the decease

of Bishop Jewel, who, long before his final sickness, had predicted its distant approach, and who, when actually overtaken by it, foretold the precise day of his death. 'So far was he,' writes Toplady, 'from shrinking back at the thoughts of his dissolution, that by fasting, labour, and watching, he rather seemed to accelerate it: desirous to entertain death, and to meet his Saviour.' That the prediction involves an accelerating process of dissolution, is a key to the problem, at any rate in some instances, and those not the least markworthy. Swedenborg is said to have predicted the day of his own death, in a letter written to John Wesley some weeks before. Of this prophetic letter it has, indeed, been observed that no copy is extant, and that although it is *said* to have been read by Wesley before a circle of friends, yet no mention of it occurs in the minutely particular diary of the great Methodist leader. Even granting to the full, however, the authenticity of the tradition, there is not, as an able authority contends, a great deal to startle us in the case of a prophecy which carries with it so much the means of effecting its own verification. 'There is far more of the influence of cause and effect than of mere coincidence or oracular vision in those frequently quoted instances in which the presentiment of death has been followed by the reality. We are told of hale and lusty young women among the Polynesians dying, amidst the most agonising struggles, merely from the impression that they were being "prayed to death" by some known or unknown A, B, or C.' And that an aged enthusiast, it is inferred, should, in the exercise of his professed connection with another world, lay down the precise day of his own exit, and verify the vaticination, sure enough, to the hour, will be no great portent or miracle to those who have made a little common psychology their study. Adopting which interpretation in the Baron Emmanuel's case, and adapting it to others, we may freely allow, be the concession worth what it may (but that's not much), that the sunset of life (to apply Campbell's lyric) gave them mystical lore, and the coming event cast its shadow before.

NICIAS FOXCAR.

Thomas Beach, del. W. A. Cranston, sc.

"CHAINED."

CHALKED

How I won my darling?
This is all the tale:
On the broad Atlantic
We were under sail.

Wide outspread, the water
Rippled in the light:
Swiftly on the quarter
Hove a sail in sight.

In its onward speeding
We, with eyes intent,
Ev'ry movement heeding,
Watch'd it as it went.

Soon it pass'd, and fleetly
Rosa darling flew,
'To the bow!' cried sweetly;
'There the better view.'

Luckless victim! Smartly
Jack was to the fore,
Quick for fun, though partly
Bent on grog galore.

All absorb'd he found her
Lost to fee or fine;
Knelt, and deftly round her
Chalk'd a magic line.

By the circle bounded,
What might set her free?
Coin or kiss? Surrounded,
Smiled she then on me.

Like the prison'd starling,
Caught and ill at ease,
'*Do*,' she cried—the darling!—
'*Do* un-chalk me, please!'

I obey'd, and won her—
Mine to have and hold—
In a defter circle,
In a ring of gold.

WILLIAM SAWYER.

AT THE BAR

A Story of a Rapacious Creditor

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

Don't be frightened, all alarming as the title of this story may seem on first perusal: you will find ere long that it is by no means a terrible tale. There was a large oil-painting called 'At the Bar,' by Mr. Frederick Walker, exhibited in the Royal Academy a year or two since; and I remember having been so struck with the haggard face and the weird despair of the young woman clutching at the rails of a felon's dock, while an invisible jury below were considering their verdict, that I went home full of Mr. Frederick Walker and his powerful counterfeit presentment of—let us hope—innocence in distress, and determined to put in literary shape the drama, which, as it seemed, the artist had narrated on canvas. There was no question about asking Mr. Frederick Walker's permission in the matter: plagiarists never ask leave; but I was deterred from carrying out my design principally by the remembrance of the mishap which befell the popular author who thought himself so wondrous wise in founding a moving love-story on the famous picture of the 'Momentous Question'—you remember—the stout poacher-looking young man, heavily fettered, sitting on his prison pallet and hiding his face with one hand while the other was clasped between the palms of a village maiden, who was asking him some question, the reply to which, as the delicate pencil of the artist, Miss Sarah Setchell, conveyed to us, involved infinite agony. The popular author wrote his moving love-story and published it; when, to his dismay, he discovered that Miss Setchell's water-colour drawing was avowedly an illustration of a scene in one of the Rev. Mr. Crabbe's 'Tales of the Hall.' For aught I could tell, Mr. Walker's 'At the Bar' might have been but a pictorial commentary on a chapter in some thoroughly well-known novel or poem that I had never read. I was wise in time, and held my hand; and, let me give you this advice, brother plagiarists, never steal from the big men; rifle the little ones, and the dead, if practicable. They can't cry out. 'Body-snatching' or the 'kinchin lay' is your department of art: leave highway-robbery and burglary to coarser marauders.

Thus, when I christen this chronicle 'At the Bar,' you are not to indulge in any distressing visions as to young women with pale cheeks and inflamed eyelids, or male culprits with forbidding countenances and downcast mien holding up their hands in obedience to

the clerk of the arraigns bidding them to say how they will be tried, when they would much rather not be tried at all—a hard-visaged warder, male or female, surveying the court from the background, impassibly. This story has nothing whatever to do either with the Bar of a Criminal Court, or the Bar, as a term applied to the profession whose members delight to array themselves in wigs, gowns, and bands, and who, according to cabmen, are accustomed to take the largest amount of travelling at the smallest amount of expense out of our metropolitan hackney carriages conceivable to the human mind. Nor, finally, have I anything to say about the Bar of the House of Lords, or that of the Commons. The Bar of which I purpose to treat is simply—but, hist! the time is not yet ripe for the revelation of an awful secret.

Ere these lines see the light the system for many generations prevalent in our military polity, and known as Purchase in the Army, may appear to a young and blooming generation more as a dream of the antiquated past. But at the period to which I refer the buying and selling of commissions were very prosaic and everyday practices indeed; and if a young gentleman of ardent temperament and expensive habits was ambitious of serving his country in the tented field, or in some such substitute for the field in question as a provincial garrison town or a distant colony, the first step he took towards courting the bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth was to pay the sum of four hundred and fifty pounds into an army agent's as the price of his commission—I am assuming that he was anxious to obtain an ensigncy in the line—and then he, and his parents and guardians or any friends in possession of 'influence' or 'interest' at the Horse Guards he may have been lucky enough to possess, took to pestering the Commander-in-chief, and worrying H.R.H.'s life out, officially speaking, until the royal personage who presides over the destinies of our armies, 'the soldier's friend' as he is called—every Commander-in-chief that I ever heard of was known during his tenure of office as 'the soldier's friend'—was moved some fine morning to submit the commission of Ensign Hedgling to her Most Gracious Majesty for signature.

All the necessary steps exacted by the law, or rather the usage military, were taken with this intent, once upon a time, by Charles Plantagenet Saxon, Esq., a remarkably good-looking and equally good-natured young fellow, who having been educated at a country grammar-school, where he was much renowned for his proficiency at cricket and foot-ball and rowing, was esteemed by all who knew him, including the respectable Bachelor of Divinity who had flogged him through a course of the great classic writers of antiquity, to be fully competent to serve his country in any martial post to which he might be appointed, from a drummer-boy to a field-marshal upwards.

For many ages Englishmen have been renowned for doing capitally the things they have never been taught to do; and it has been owing to this happily intuitive capacity that we have become so highly esteemed and so personally popular abroad. Charley Saxon —I call him that for brevity's sake—offered no exception to the glorious British rule. At eighteen years of age he really could do a vast number of things, and, with respect to those of which he was ignorant, he and his relatives, friends, and acquaintances firmly believed (in accordance with another happy British rule) that it was entirely useless to learn them. Thus he was a very fair hand at making Latin verses; and if he did not remember many of the rules in the Eton Grammar he had certainly repeated all of them, *sub ferulâ*, scores of times. Of the study of scriptural history he had had long and painful experience; and if he did not understand Butler's *Analogy* he had read it through, and made copious extracts from that admirable work. He could ride, drive, swim, shoot, fish, leap, run wonderfully well, and was an adept at all out-door sports. He was an excellent maker of salmon flies, made ground-bait splendidly, and understood so much about the management and maladies of horses that, but for that plaguy question of expense, his papa would have purchased a cornetcy in the cavalry for him, instead of an ensigncy in the line. He took much interest too in the improvement of our breed of horses by means of racing, and was much more cognisant of the intricacies of the odds than he was of those of the multiplication table. He rowed gloriously, and at billiards professional players could venture to give him only a very few points. And, when he was out of his nonage, what a clear, rich, baritone voice he had, and how cleverly he played on the *cornet à piston!* As to cards, there was not a game, from lansquenet to unlimited loo, from baccarat to blind-hookey, in which he was not an adept; and at the more recondite diversion of hazard his nice discrimination between nicks and mains had earned him, even before he was sixteen, the applause and admiration of his comrades; qualified, it is necessary to add, by the animadversion of his reverend preceptor. Lest you should imagine that Charley was altogether an Admirable Crichton, I must in fairness hint that there were many accomplishments which the youth did *not* possess. He knew scarcely any French, and of German, or any other modern language, he was wholly ignorant. He certainly could not have construed a page of Virgil into English without the aid of a dictionary. He was unable to draw; and he wrote a big, sprawling schoolboy hand, and was not very scrupulous as to the accuracy of his orthography. In his leisure hours he had read an amazing number of novels and plays, and had forgotten them nearly as soon as they were read. Then—what use can there be in farther pursuing the catalogue of his [illegible]; a list, moreover, which must be vastly counterbalanced

by his surprisingly brilliant attainments? There must be spots on the sun, mustn't there? Perfection is not attainable by erring mortals, is it? Charley Saxon was, emphatically speaking, a fine young fellow—a fine young English gentleman—a brave, dashing, generous youth as ever entered the famous British army.

His father, the Reverend Harold Plantagenet Saxon, M.A., was rector of Rawley-cum-Crew, in the county of Devon, and his living—a fat one, as livings went down in that part of the country—was worth about seven hundred and fifty pounds a year. His wife had a little, a very little money. He had nine children, four of them girls and grown up; and in view of these circumstances it is not perhaps to be wondered at that the Rev. H. P. Saxon was compelled to borrow from an insurance office the funds requisite to purchase his son's commission and to pay for the splendid and elaborate outfit, both in martial and in civil apparel, supplied by Messrs. Frogbelt and Scales, military clothiers of Savile-row. Young Charley easily passed the ridiculous mockery of an examination to which candidates for commissions were subjected in the happy time to which I refer; and was duly gazetted to a pair of colours in the Hundred and Fiftieth Foot (the Duke of York's regiment of Yorkshire Tykes). His pay as an ensign amounted to about thirty shillings a week, which scarcely covered his subscriptions to mess and band funds. All that his papa could allow him in addition was fifty pounds a year; so into the Hundred and Fiftieth he went, full of high hopes and noble aspirations—into the Hundred and Fiftieth he went, with an ample wardrobe and plenty of credit, to live, as a preliminary experience, at the rate of about five hundred per annum, and to consort with a number of young English gentlemen all as fine as he, some of whom had five thousand a year, while others had not fivepence of their own.

These facts remembered, the chronicler will not perhaps be considered so extravagant a narrator as the Sultana Schehezerade in the *Arabian Nights*, if he mentions that within five-and-twenty months of his entrance into the Hundred and Fiftieth Foot Charley Saxon found himself 'at the Bar.' There; I tell you again there is no need to be terrified. I don't mean the Bar of the Bankruptcy Court; although it must be owned that Charley had been threatened more than once with the ministrations of the grim tribunal in Basinghall-street. It was only at the Bar of one of Messrs. Ginger and Pop's refreshment-rooms on the Underground Railway that Charles Plantagenet Saxon, late of Her Majesty's Hundred and Fiftieth Regiment of Foot, found himself one remarkably fine July morning, and without one sixpence, nay, without one penny, in his pocket.

How had the ex-ensign, or rather ex-lieutenant, come to this lamentable pass? The tale of sorrow may be very briefly told.

His history had merely been that of many hundreds of fine young English gentlemen to whom the mess-room and the parade-ground only served as an antechamber to the kennel—that is to say, if those famous dogs, to which ruined spendthrifts are supposed to go, are favoured with the shelter even of a kennel. It had been Charley Saxon's misfortune with a gross income of under one hundred and thirty pounds a year to live at the rate of a thousand or fifteen hundred. He was not, perhaps, more extravagant than his brother subalterns; but the Hundred and Fiftieth was a fast regiment, and the youth's pace was in accordance with the rapidity of his corps. He went very rapidly indeed, and the course was all down hill. Debts and discount, discount and debts; those were the diapason of the grand pianoforte on which he performed a remarkably brilliant concerto, which ere long came to an end with a crash, which Madame Arabella Goddard could scarcely have excelled. Then he had to sell his commission; or rather the usurers, to whom he had long since pawned it, sold it for him, appropriated the proceeds and credited him therewith—less costs and charges in part payment of the multitudinous bills and I O Us decorated with his sign manual in their possession. His tradesmen proper—his tailors, bootmakers, hatters, jewellers, *que sais-je?*—were furious. Why, they asked passionately, had all the money accruing from the sale of his rank gone to the Jews? Why had he not disposed of the commission for their, the tailors' and bootmakers', benefit? So they sued him. So got judgments and executions against him by the score. Whitecross-street and the Bench were existent gaols for debt in those days, and sponging-houses flourished in the purlieus of Chancery-lane. The fateful *capias ad satisfaciendum* was taken out against Charles Plantagenet Saxon, wherever the Sheriff of Middlesex should find him running up and down in his bailiwick, over and over again; and penitent letters, wretched letters, despairing letters had to be written by the incarcerated prodigal from Mr. Melphibosheth's in Cursitor-street and Messrs. Bildad and Shuhite's (officers to the Sheriffs) in Bream's-buildings to the poor old parson down in Devonshire, imploring the means of release. The rector of Rawley-cum-Crew did what he could, which was not much. Then Charley was entitled to a share in a reversionary property on the death of an aunt who was sixty, but the female branches of whose family had from time immemorial been renowned—in despite of the dicta of Sir George Cornewall Lewis and Mr. Thoms—for living until a hundred and three. Charley was glad to get a hundred and fifty pounds for the contingent eight or nine hundred which were to come to him on the demise of this descendant of a long line of centenarians. The hundred and fifty went to satisfy two or three of the most pressing tailors and bootmakers, and six weeks afterwards the old aunt who ought—if the Northam[illegible] were to be trusted—to

have lived till a hundred and three, died of a quinsey. Mr. Barabbas Dunas, financial agent, of 302A Pall Mall, was the gentleman who purchased Charley's reversion; and Mr. Lypry, officer to the Sheriff of Middlesex, arrested Charley as he came down the Pall Mall chambers' stairs with Mr. Dunas' cheque in his pocket, at the suit of Messrs. Purpel and Linninger, hosiers, of the Burlington-arcade. It was very provoking.

Yes; but it was a good deal more provoking to find oneself at the bar of Messrs. Ginger and Pop's refreshment-room at the Charing-cross station of the Underground Railway without one single coin of the realm in one's possession. It was most provoking of all to be in debt to a tall young lady with a towering chignon, a bright blonde in hue, in the sum of one shilling, for a glass of soda-water-and-brandy just supplied, and which one had swallowed in the hurry in the moment without in the least reflecting that one hadn't the money to pay for one's refreshment. 'One' was Charles Plantagenet Saxon, Esq., late of Her Majesty's Hundred and Fiftieth Regiment of Foot, and this is how he had got into his last and most awkward dilemma. He had been for some months now 'loafing,' to use the inelegant but expressive locution, about London—a kind of decayed dandy Mr. Micawber, waiting for something to turn up. He had gone home for a time to Rawley-cum-Crew, but he had not found much felicity in the bosom of his family; the domestic hearth did not throw out a very genial heat, the fact being that most of the Wallsend, which should have kindled the cheerful blaze, had been burnt by Charley's extravagance. His father, who had been obliged to borrow a good deal more money to help pay the young spendthrift's debts—and they were not paid yet—looked somewhat wrathfully at him; and Charley could not help fancying that his papa grudged him the meat he ate and the wine he drank at his table. At least, he heard a good many cursory but unpleasant allusions to having 'so many mouths to feed.' He was very sorry, now, for his folly and extravagance; but where was the use of his sorrow? It would not bring back the money which should have furnished his sisters—four tall young women, desperately anxious to be married to four pale-faced curates—with dowries. He felt, uneasily, that everybody in the house, down to the page-boy in buttons, was under the impression that he was a robber and a swindler. His little brother Jack told him plainly that, in consequence of his, Charley's, having made such an 'awful mess of it,' he, Jack, was debarred from receiving the education of a gentleman at a public school, and was doomed to receive his classical learning under the eye and the virgal rod of his papa at home. Charley had not the heart to box the boy's ears for his impertinence. The reproach stung him to the quick, but he could not but own that he had deserved it. And can there be a situation more deplorable than that of the bankrupt prodigal, who is so very willing to come home, and say 'Father,

I have sinned,' but who finds that there is no nice hot roast fillet of veal, with stuffing, waiting for him at the paternal domicile—nay, more, that his family have not the slightest objection to his staying away, minding swine, and feeding on draff and husks for so long a period as ever he pleased?

Wearied with perpetual repetitions of platitudes regarding the expediency of not eating the bread of idleness, but by earning it by the sweat of one's brow, and disgusted with the frequency of allusions to Queensland or the diamond fields as a field for emigration, Charley came to London with as much money as he could borrow from his outraged sire—I don't think the advance exceeded a ten-pound note—to see if anything would turn up. Something indeed did turn up nearly every other day in the shape of a dun, a writ, a county-court summons, or a sheriff's officer; but these were not precisely the chances which our postulant was anxious to win. He advertised in the newspapers for an appointment in connection with a public office, and he sent in an application to the Justices of Blankshire when the post of Governor of the Quodford County Gaol became vacant, being given to understand that positions of that nature were quite in the way of gentlemen retired from the army; but none of his efforts succeeded, and days and weeks passed by without anything turning up by means of which that grand desideratum, a belly-full of bread and meat every day, might be earned. Fortunately he had still a very good wardrobe—the relics of his once monumental tick with the West-end tailors—remaining. He was still able to look like a gentleman, and even like a 'swell;' and there even remained a considerable surplus of well-cut garments, on which sundry accommodating tradesmen in St. Martin's-lane and about Leicester-square, and who transacted business under the familiar yet mystic sign of Three Golden Balls, were not unwilling to make advances. It was a most melancholy thing, of course, to pawn the coats and pantaloons for which one hadn't paid; but still, under the painfully provoking circumstances, what was a fellow to do?

Thoroughly 'hard up' then, and, as it seemed, hopelessly 'down on his back,' was Charley Saxon one bright July morning as, after a before-breakfast visit to an accommodating tradesman who made advances on tangible securities at the corner of Cecil-court, St. Martin's-lane, he strolled through the Lowther-arcade and emerged into the Strand, opposite the South Eastern terminus. He stood for some minutes looking wistfully enough at Mr. Barry's beautiful restoration of Charing-cross in the station courtyard, as though expecting something to turn up from the interior of that highly florid monument. Nothing, however, came out of the cross; and then Charley thought that about the best course to pursue would be to go and breakfast in the refreshment-room of the station. Stay, he thought, there was more than one execut' im: Charing-cross rail-

way terminus was a very public place, and it would be an awful bore to be arrested on such a fine summer morning. Wasn't there a place, under an arch at the bottom of Villiers-street, and close to the Embankment station of the Underground Railway, called Gatti's? Egad, he'd go and breakfast there, even although he could get nothing better than coffee and penny ices.

He reached the bottom of Villiers-street, entered one of Mr. Gatti's spacious saloons, and discovering that ham and eggs or chops and steaks were as attainable as penny ices in that comfortable café, ordered some breakfast and installed himself at one of the marble tables. To his horror he had scarcely got through the first leading article of that deservedly popular journal, the *Daily Diatribe*, when raising his eyes he saw sitting at a table, right over against him, and withering him with baleful glances, little Moss Abrahams, whom he knew to be one of the chief retainers of Messrs. Bildad and Shuhite, officers to the Sheriff of Middlesex, Bream's-buildings, E.C. In extreme perturbation Charley Saxon rose, and sought for his hat; but simultaneously Mr. Moss Abrahams, whose *couvre chef* was already on his head, rose likewise. 'Ere, Capting!' cried Mr. Abrahams, producing a slip of paper from a huge leather pocket-book. Charley Saxon waited to hear no more; but, to use another vulgar but nervous term, 'bolted.' Who ate the breakfast he had ordered, none shall say. Perhaps Giacomo Pifferedoli from Turin, the waiter, was responsible for the meal, and choked himself with it to be revenged on the false Englishman. At all events Charley Saxon showed the sheriff's officer the cleanest pair of heels imaginable out of a footrace between Deerfoot and Captain Patten Saunders. He contrived to give Mr. Abrahams the slip completely. Fortunately there is always a crowd at the bottom of Villiers-street, composed of railway and steamboat passengers, roughs, ragged boys on their way to their favourite recreation ground on the Thames embankment, orange-vendors, and barefooted girls who pick pockets under the pretence of selling flowers and cigar-lights. In the midst of this motley throng Charley Saxon was satisfactorily lost, but he could hear the Hebrew's melodious voice shouting after him, 'Capting! Capting!' It was by fate, however, that the luckless ex-subaltern's footsteps were conducted, and fate led him right into the station of the Underground Railway. He could see through a grove of girders and trusses beneath him that there was a train drawn up to the platform and obviously on the point of starting. He rushed, with a crowd of descending passengers, to the wicket leading to the staircase of descent. 'Ticket, sir, show your ticket!' cried the collector, barring the passage with his arm, as Charley essayed to hurry by. Alas, he had no ticket! The man was perfectly civil but firm; he pointed out the pigeon-hole where the necessary pasteboard was procurable, observing that the gentleman would miss this train, but

that another would be up in five minutes. As Charley fell back ruefully in obedience to this inflexible mandate, he caught a glimpse of Mr. Moss Abrahams rushing by him in red-hot haste. The Caucasian alguazil did not see him, and evidently thought that his intended prey had passed through the wicket, and so down to the platform. 'Ticket!' again cried the collector, in stern performance of his bounden duty; but wary Mr. Moss Abrahams was prepared for that as for any other possible emergency; 'Sheason!' he cried triumphantly, flourishing a square of very greasy leather in the collector's face. Whether the envelope of hide did really contain a season-ticket for the Underground Railway, or whether it was a ruse on the part of the crafty Israelite, I'm not prepared to say; but he was one of that kind of people who seem to carry every possible thing of a documentary nature about with them—writing paper and envelopes, almanacs, bill, postage, and receipt stamps, writs, affidavits, post-cards, and forms for making wills and executing covenants. At all events the subterfuge, if subterfuge it was, had brilliant success. From a cunning coign of espial the jubilant ex-subaltern watched his Hebrew foe descend to the platform, and hurry into a carriage; the whistle sounded, and the train went roaring out of the station. The design of Mr. Moss Abrahams was evidently to alight from the train at the next station, Westminster-bridge, and search at his ease for his victim, who, he could have no doubt, was within a few carriages of the one in which he was sitting.

The hitherto-dejected lieutenant watched with profound satisfaction the departure of his would-be captor.

'Sha'n't trouble the Underground any more to-day,' he inwardly and jocosely remarked. 'Give railways a wide berth. Try Greenwich in a steamer. Now I may as well go back to Gatti's, and have some breakfast; but first—well, the race did wind me a little—I'll have a soda-and-b.'

He walked to the refreshment-room, ordered a soda-and-b., that is to say, brandy, and swallowed it with much inward satisfaction, audibly complimenting meanwhile the tall young lady who served him on the altitude of her chignon and the general amenity of her demeanour.

The tall young lady did not seem very much flattered by these honeyed words, and uttered a by no means *sotto-voce* reference to 'some people's impudence.' She was a haughty young lady, and knew what was due to her. All Messrs. Ginger and Pop's young ladies are haughty, and resent rudeness with inexorable iciness.

'One shilling, sir, if *you* please,' said the barmaid, in an accent rivalling in frigidity the lump of ice which she had placed in the soda-and-b.

'A lowly Robert,' replied the abandoned profligate; ''tis yours, my charmer. Might I trouble you for change for a sovereign, fair one?'

The young lady addressed as 'fair' tossed her head with more concentrated indignation. She fancied a covert insult in the epithet. For the damsel with the bright blonde chignon happened to have been born with dark-brown hair; and her golden locks were not a boon of nature, but a gift of art. 'Twas Dr. Botanky's celebrated Extract of Aureoline the which she used to tinge her tresses.

'A shilling,' she repeated loftily.

Ex-Lieutenant Saxon sought in the pocket of his vest for his portemonnaie, in which he had placed not half an hour before the sum of twenty-two shillings and sixpence and a quadrangular piece of cardboard, the last being a mortgage-bond, or certificate of hypothecation, issued by the accommodating tradesman at the corner of Cecil-court, and having reference to three pairs of doeskin trousers and one black dress-coat with watered-silk facings, deposited that morning in the name of John Jinks, residing at 84 Clapham-rise.

Horror, the portemonnaie was gone! The distracted lieutenant searched pocket after pocket, but all in vain. He had evidently been robbed by some felonious member of the motley throng in Villiers-street.

He began to stammer out a series of more or less ridiculous apologies, but these were cut short by a stern command given by the tall young lady to a youth who was polishing the taps of a beer-engine to fetch a policeman.

'I thought as much,' she resumed, tossing her head until her radiant chignon threatened to go through the ceiling of the refreshment-room. 'Parties come here, and give themselves no end of airs, as if they were lords of the creation, and when they're asked to pay for what they've had, they talk about having their pockets picked.'

'There was a case just like it last Toosday week,' interposed a horsy-looking man, who was drinking cold gin-and-water. 'He wur all over beard and mustachys and gold chains as if he'd been a lord, and had three pork-pies and a plate of weal and 'am, let alone two bottles of stout and a pint of Shabbly, and then ses he, "I ain't got no money, and you may do vot you like with me." Mr. Knox, vich was the beak a sittin' at Marlborough-street, giv' him three months 'ard, and he turns round as bold as brass and ses as 'ow he would do that little lot on his head.'

'But, good Heavens!' pleaded the unfortunate subaltern, 'this is all a dreadful mistake. I've been robbed. I'm a gentleman—'

'O yes,' arose in a hoarse murmur from the crowd, which had by this time collected round the bar. 'Ve dessay. A pretty gentleman! Gentlemen pays for what they've had to drink.'

The wretched Charles Plantagenet had utterly given himself up for lost, and was expecting every moment the arrival of a police constable, with a pair of handcuffs, when there came pushing

through the throng a little old gentleman, in a drab hat and a long green overcoat reaching nearly to his heels, and with a very high white neckcloth tied in a large bow with pendent ends. He had a curly brown wig and gold-rimmed spectacles, pushed high up on the bridge of his large flexible nose, so that two very bright little gray eyes could be seen peering beneath. He was very much marked with the small-pox, wore false teeth, and might have been either on the shady side of fifty or the sunny side of seventy.

'What's this? what's this?' cried the new arrival, bustling to the bar. 'Tush, tush! psha! I've seen it all. Quite a mistake. Gentleman's had his pocket picked evidently. I was robbed myself only the day before yesterday of a gold repeater, which cost me forty guineas, at the bottom of Villiers-street.'

'Why doesn't he pay for his refreshments?' quavered the lofty barmaid, thinking perhaps that she had been a little too hasty.

'Why?' repeated the little old gentleman, 'because he's been robbed. I know him perfectly well. Member of all the West-end clubs, and so forth. There's the money'—the little old gentleman threw down half-a-crown on the counter—'keep the change, my dear. Now, sir, this way; quite a mistake. Dear me! dear me! how much you have suffered!'

The little old gentleman led Charles, half stunned with amazement, out of the station. When they were on the Embankment and alone, he turned his little gray eyes, with an expression of infinite cunning, towards the gentleman he had rescued from such infinite peril, and remarked:

'Ah, ha! you won't readily forget those five minutes you spent AT THE BAR, will you?'

IRISH CRIME

Why is it that, while statistics show a smaller proportion of crime in Ireland than in England or Scotland, that country is considered unsafe, more than one-quarter of its landed proprietors, representing property to the extent of one-third of the whole value, absenting themselves, and spending their incomes in other lands?

The question is often asked by Englishmen, ignorant alike of Ireland and the Irish people, and is met by the glib denial that the country is unsafe. Nevertheless landlords leave it; English capitalists will not invest in it; and the intricate problem of agrarian crime, its causes and its cure, remains one of vital importance in that land of social and political anomalies.

Political and agrarian crimes are in Ireland twin-brothers, and to go back to their causes would require a review of Ireland's history for two hundred and fifty years, with its oppression and injustice on one hand, misery and reprisals on the other. However, for the early part of the present century there was a lull, and relations between landlord and tenant became so amicable that, for present purposes, we may commence with the state of affairs in 1845.

At that time a teeming population lived on minutely subdivided farms. The potato crop supplied food for the family, while the pigs reared on its refuse brought in sufficient money for rent, clothing, dues, and drink; and everything seemed happy and comfortable. Improvident landlords got the rents as best they could, from tenants not less reckless. Credit was easily had, and estates were deeply mortgaged. But in 1845, with the lost potato crop, was swept away the whole support of the nation. When the crash came, landlords suffered for their former extravagance; no rents were paid; mortgages were foreclosed; poor-rates, in some instances to the amount of the whole rateable value, were levied—till at length the feeling obtained that small holdings meant ruin to owner and occupier. Landlords, desperate with the dread of pauperism, cleared whole tracts, thousands died of starvation and exposure in the ditches, and the country rang with curses and cries for vengeance.

In those terrible days were sown the seeds that have germinated and borne the bitter fruit of agrarianism down to the present day.

But outside and beyond agrarian crime itself is the sustaining sympathy that makes it so dangerous, and an antipathy to English law because it *is* law, and the Irish constabulary as its guardians, incomprehensible to those who think of the average Irish

peasant as a reckless, good-natured, affectionate, and amusing fellow, taking no thought for the morrow, and less for the day that is past. A close acquaintance would show that beneath the gay exterior is a proud unreasoning sensitiveness, peculiarly susceptible to oratorical influence, and a tiger-like ferocity that, when roused, sweeps before it every good quality. When in this state, gratitude, friendship, affection are flung aside, and he is for the time a dangerous maniac; and the agitators who work upon the worst side of his character know but too well how to keep him in his relations with England at the simmering point. Old sores are never allowed to heal, old troubles never forgotten, and long after Parliament has swept away an oppressive enactment its bygone provisions are canvassed as if they still existed in all their rigour. Concessions, too, are represented as being wrung by fear from reluctant tyrants, and the Land Act is looked upon as a miserable instalment of what the farmers demand—absolute and unconditional fixity of tenure as long as the rent is paid. This is the standpoint adopted by the people; and however necessary may be a small plot for the improvement of a property, no matter how liberal the terms offered to its occupant, his eviction will take place at the peril of the landlord's or agent's life.

Side by side with the cause of agrarianism we must look at the cause of antipathy to the Irish constabulary, so obstructive to their efforts in prosecuting crimes against the person, and to do so we must go back yet a few years farther, to those immediately following Catholic Emancipation, when the people, wild with the triumphs of their efforts, entered in a combination, of which the Householders' Club, formed in Waterford in 1830, was the nucleus. The club was formed with the object of organising a systematic opposition to the payment of tithes. The combination soon spread over the south and west of Ireland, adopting the principle of allowing the stock of those who refused to pay to be seized and put up to public auction, and threatening with vengeance any person daring to bid for cattle so offered for sale. Eight years previously the Irish constabulary was first formed, and the effect of the anti-tithe agitation was to bring them soon into collision with the people. Ill-feeling was generated, and many unfortunate encounters took place. In 1831 two factions united against the constabulary, who had endeavoured to separate them, and attacked them with so much fury that at last the police fired, killing thirteen and wounding many. A short time after, at Newtownbarry, the police were again attacked when escorting tithe proctors. This time a yeomanry corps came upon the scene, and fired upon the people, killing seventeen; while in December of the same year, when on another tithe-hunting expedition at Carrickshock, in the county of Kilkenny, a party of police was attacked by the people when going through a defile, and seventeen of them, with their officer, killed.

This state of things lasted until the passing of the Act in 1836 that changed the tithe into a rent-charge. The consequence was inevitable. The people, passionate, unreflective, and vengeful, saw in the constabulary but the instruments of what they considered a dire oppression, and treated them as dangerous enemies.

Where the Catholic portion of the community was banded in what was considered a sacred cause, to hold communication with or give information to one of the enemy was denounced as a crime of exceptional blackness, and the name of 'informer' or 'stag' was considered a brand of the deepest ignominy. From that time to the present agitation has recurred in succeeding waves. The repeal agitation of 1842 had not yet subsided when the famine scourged the country. The refusal of Lord John Russell to allow foreign grain for the starving people into the country free of duty, 'lest it might disarrange the corn market,' drove even sensible men into the 'Young Ireland' party, whose frenzied hopes terminated at Ballingarry in 1848. Ere a decade had passed, the Phœnix Society was in active operation, and, seven years later, the Government felt compelled to aim the first blow at its lineal descendant, Fenianism, which burst into a flickering flame in 1867. Thus the ideas of the lower strata of Irish society have steadily run counter to English law and order. The antagonism that first manifested itself in political matters soon spread to all crimes of the passions, or, as they are termed by the peasantry, 'clean crimes'—in contradistinction to crimes involving dishonesty or fraud—and social disgrace fell upon the man who, deserting his faction, and neglecting the time-honoured custom of 'blood for blood,' turned to the law of the land for redress. The first duty impressed on the children is reticence in any communication with an official, and a stranger is astonished at the cleverness with which very young children fence with any inquiry made by a policeman. The following incident shows how early the principle is instilled: A soldier, walking through a southern town a short time since, asked one of two small boys, who were playing at marbles, where a certain publichouse was to be found. The little fellow told him immediately; but when the soldier had gone, his companion, horror-struck at what he had done, said, 'O, Jack, why did you tell? Don't you know you'll be damned if you give information to a soldier or a policeman?'

What hope is there for the constitutional administration of law when, even in a case where a man's sympathies are in the right direction, he is deterred by this strange moral warp from doing his first duty as a citizen? But when, as in the case of agrarian crimes, the sympathy is all on the wrong side, and in many cases known murderers are openly fêted and courted, it is hopeless indeed. This it is that makes Ireland so dangerous to some, and unpleasantly uncertain to others, and drives her pro-

prietors away. The feeling that one is surrounded by an atmosphere of sympathy for the only class of crime that affects his safety, is not conducive to a landlord's comfort, or encouraging to his stay in the country.

These observations apply only to crimes of violence. In cases of robbery or fraud the people have no objection to give information; therefore those crimes are rare, and almost always successfully prosecuted by the police. It is a curious code of honour, but the fact remains, that a man who would scorn to steal your property, and would return your purse if he found it, would not have a qualm of conscience, in the event of a trifling difference about land, in waiting behind a hedge, and shooting you dead as you passed; and if ten 'respectable' men were passing at the time, not one of them would have seen the shot fired or heard the noise!

Ireland is apparently quiet at present, and the cry is once more taken up about absenteeism by those who insist on regarding the country as a Garden of Eden when not in open rebellion. But the reasons for the lull in agrarian crimes are, that the landlords are cowed by the examples of vengeance exacted with almost perfect impunity, and dare not attempt to assert their rights. Some few years since a gentleman in Westmeath took the subject of labourers' cottages into consideration. He built some fifteen cottages, in which he allowed his labourers to live, free of rent, on condition that they should work for him at a stated rate. Hardly were they settled in the cottages when they left his work, and took employment from the surrounding farmers, informing the owner of the cottages at the same time that if he turned them out he had better buy his coffin. He knows it is no idle threat, and there they remain to this day, paying no rent, and doing no work for him. The country, so far as his property is concerned, is perfectly quiet! He has not yet become an absentee; but should he be driven to punish the dishonesty of those labourers who insist on living at free quarters, he has the Gladstonian number of courses open to him: remaining, with the certainty of being shot if unprotected; police protection, which means two men with loaded arms never allowing him out of their sight, walking with him when he walks, driving with him if he drives, patrolling outside his window if he dares to leave it open—an utter destruction of privacy; or flight to some country where he can breathe the free air of heaven without fear, where he can walk or drive alone without the necessity for watching every bush with the nervous apprehension of a hunted animal. Which course would the reader adopt? I have quoted but one case out of one hundred that could be told if necessary; but enough to show how different is the landlords' Ireland from the tourists' and the politicians' Ireland.

There are other causes that operate in a lesser degree to bring

about this unsatisfactory state of things. Added to the point of honour not to give information in cases of crimes of violence, an Irishman has a *dread of public opinion*, and there is among the lower orders a deplorable absence of truth, or healthy public spirit. The witness who proves himself to be an ingenious liar is applauded, when he who sinks to the level of plain unvarnished truth is scorned as a booby. The result of this is obvious, and the fact accounts for the small number of convictions for agrarian crimes, about every one of which the constabulary have accurate information, that the givers have cleverness enough to know they cannot be compelled to repeat in a court of justice. Let us take a case of murder, and follow up the probable course of subsequent events in England and Ireland.

A man has been found on the roadside murdered. A strange hat is found close to the body, and there is evidence of a struggle having taken place; so that in all probability the murderer bears some marks upon his person or his clothes. In England, the person finding the body sends or goes for the nearest policeman, who arrives at the scene, attended by some idlers, and by some people anxious to do what can be done towards the discovery of the murderer. Inquiries are set on foot; people are asked if they have seen a man without a hat or with torn clothes. If a motive can be discovered, the suspected person is arrested; and if his movements have been observed, some pudding-headed yokel, who has not taken the trouble to calculate consequences, answers readily when and where he has seen him. The English peasant is not, as a rule, so keen an observer as his Irish brother, but what he knows he tells at once. A passer-by has seen a man with a red kerchief on his head going towards a village; the policeman, with his willing assistants, go there, and find from a shopkeeper that he has sold a hat to a person whom he describes accurately. The purchaser is traced, till at last he is run down. Everybody who can give information comes forward and swears to it, and justice is done. Of course this is a very simple case. In Ireland, gossip would soon bring intelligence to the police, who, on arriving at the place, find a few peasants sitting about preserving a rigid silence. No person has the most remote idea who could have murdered the man, and no one has ever seen a hat like the one found. In a short time many police arrive; the place is searched. If footprints are visible, casts of them are taken. The police, who know everybody, and at least the quarrels of everybody, lose no time in looking after suspected persons. If no motive is known, the chances are remote indeed. The owner of the hat has been met by the traveller, but tidings of a murder closes his lips, lest he might be brought forward as a witness in the prosecution, and expose himself to the vengeance of the prisoner's relatives. The shopkeeper who sold the hat is equally silent; no information is forthcoming, and the affair is

shrouded in mystery. Yet every circumstance of the murder is known and freely canvassed in all the peasants' houses, and is soon known to the police. A man has seen the murder; he has spoken of it. A policeman questions him, and he tells him everything 'in confidence.' The murderer is arrested; the witness is brought before the magistrates; and, after sundry threats of imprisonment, kisses the sacred volume and declares solemnly that he knows nothing whatever about the occurrence! The law does not allow his detention, and he is liberated. If no circumstantial evidence turns up, the prisoner, who has been remanded from time to time, is released, and, like an Indian with a scalp at his belt, is honoured for the dangers he has passed. The relatives of the slain man are satisfied, and look hopefully for the time when they may avenge him by killing the murderer, or, in default, his nearest relative, on the first opportunity. This may, to some extent, explain the difficulties against which the Irish constabulary have to contend, and which are so little understood in England.

In a word, the Irish people ignore the first principle that makes the difference between civilisation and barbarism—that of merging private vengeance into public justice, and accepting all crimes as crimes against the community at large, in the punishment of which every individual in the community is interested. When the Irish people adopt that principle and come forward with clean hands, they may with justice complain of the terrible drain caused by absenteeism, and call for some stringent measure compelling proprietors to fill the social gap caused by their absence. But it is rather too much to insist on their return where the business involved in the management of their properties is transacted at the peril of their lives, without public opinion to deter, or public assistance to bring to justice, their possible assassins.

Enough has been written to give some slight idea of the state of the country as regards political and agrarian crime, and the question is, What feasible remedy is practicable?

A community, like an individual, may be made to suffer in two ways—through its conscience or its pocket; and if we cannot awake the one, we cannot apply a remedy through the other.

The following syllogism is simple: 'An Irish peasant will not act against the opinion of his neighbours. The opinion of his neighbours is opposed to agrarian crime. An Irish peasant will not commit agrarian crime.'

Of course the converse holds equally good, and is borne out by the fact that sympathy with agrarian crime is a disgraceful truth. This being so, and the moral obliquity of the people preventing their conscience being touched, but one course remains with a hope of success—try the effect of an attack upon their pockets. And that this has been once successfully tried, the following case will prove:

A few years since a gentleman was murdered in the county Tipperary. His murderer was arrested, tried, and in the face of evidence almost as strong as 'proof of Holy Writ,' acquitted by the conscientious jury. His release was hailed with loud acclamations; he was escorted from the assize town by thousands, and the procession entered his native village headed by a band playing 'See the Conquering Hero comes.' On his way home he acknowledged to his admiring attendants that he had shot the man for whose murder he had been tried, and, in consequence of the then safe acknowledgment, was the admired and fêted hero of the country-side for weeks. The Government placed on the lands where the murder was committed a number of extra police, whose pay, &c., was levied off the neighbouring occupiers as a special tax. After a time it became known that as long as the murderer remained in the country, the police would remain at the people's expense, and in one week he was driven to America.

It is all very well to talk of the glories of our constitution and safeguards of our legal procedure, but, it must be remembered, that constitution and those safeguards were framed for a people who acknowledged the duties of a citizen to himself, his country, and his God. When a large section of a community expunges from the Decalogue the sixth commandment, and turns the legal safeguards into a coach-and-six, in which justice is to be escaped, it is high time that exceptional measures should be adopted, even though the victims make pitiful complaints.

The thing can be done, and to men outside the glamour of party expediency it looks simple enough. The Land Act has removed the last theoretical excuse for agrarian crime, and but one thing is necessary to insure its cessation. Impress the people with the conviction that it will not pay. Under a late Act the grand jury have the power of levying compensation for the family of a murdered person off the barony; but, be the amount great or small, it is all paid as ordinary county cess, and does not come home with sufficient clearness to those who pay it. In cases of threatened murder, the Government might, if necessary, order the collection of the rent by extra constabulary, for whom a special tax should be levied. In the event of a murder, remembering that in all probability it could have been prevented had the tenants felt inclined, place extra police at once upon the property, and keep them there at the tenants' expense long enough to make them all feel, by experience, that the prevention of agrarian crime is a matter of grave import to them. In time the hideous sympathy that so disgraces the country would be stifled, and the habit of prevention, rooted in selfishness, might develop into a more healthy feeling, restoring confidence to those without whose presence the country must remain a beaten laggard in the race for material prosperity. B.

MRS. MAYCOCK'S KEYS

For some years I have been the owner of a bunch of keys—a good big bunch, of which, however, only two were practicable. For a long time I had resolved to sort that bunch of keys, most of which were waifs and strays. There were two or three latch-keys, one, I verily believe, of a house in London at which I lived fifteen years ago; one of a house in Brighton long ago given up *diis manibus*. Memory refuses to affix titles to the rest. At last, however, a happy fate has relieved me of the incubus of this useless bunch of metal. A change of residence has deprived me of the two last working keys, and left me unencumbered. Of what use are keys to me? I have never more money than I can conveniently carry in my pocket. The few letters that I receive all the world is welcome to read; they are read extensively in the household, I know. I have long since thrown open my skeleton cupboard, and finding the grizzly spectre I dreaded a mere harmless joist of some decayed old building, with a few laths nailed across it, simulating ribs and vertebræ, I have burnt it upon the domestic hearth and scattered its ashes to the four winds. Thus bare as my cupboards may be, they are at least clean and white-washed. And my soul is emancipated from locks and keys.

In this state of happy freedom I was one day sitting by the open window, smoking the fragrant matutinal pipe, and conning over the *Times*, placidly conscious of the pleasant morning sounds and sights: bells jangling softly from the town hard by, the clank of a scythe in a field below, the cry of the man with the vegetable-cart; a dog barking, fowls clucking, children at play—according to one of the Welsh triads, the three signs of an inhabited country. It was a leisure time with everybody at home. My wife seemed for once to be in an idle mood. Sailors, you know, when there comes an idle time—when the wind blows fair and steady, and the sails draw as evenly as if they were moulded in papier-maché; when all the sheets are belayed, and they have finished coiling little ropes round big ones; when even the first-lieutenant wears an unruffled brow, and the boatswain has ceased from piping, and there is nothing whatever to do—Jack or Tom forthwith proceed to overhaul their chests. So with women, I think—something, in idle moments, they will overhaul; in this case the work-basket. Ends of ribbon are sorted, bits of lace turned over and mentally appraised, half-finished undertakings sighed over; the eldest daughter looking gravely on, with a view to the welfare of *her* eldest daughter Dolly. At the bottom of the basket is a *débris* of unconsidered trifles.

'Ned, here's something of yours,' the wife says; 'here's a bunch of keys!'

'Don't, for goodness' sake, give them to me; I don't want them; shouldn't know where to put them.'

'Then what shall I do with them? I can't leave them in my work-basket.'

'Throw them away.'

A bunch of keys, however, are not things of which one can dispose at a moment's notice. If you threw them away, you would see them advertised in the next day's paper; they would be traced to you; money would be demanded; there would be bother of some sort. No, it wouldn't do to throw them away.

'Look here, we're going on the river to-night; we'll drop the keys overboard and make an end of them.'

Before this doom, however, had been carried into effect, a claimant appeared for the bunch of keys. They were not mine, ti seemed, but nurse's—Nurse Maycock's.

Nurse came in with her youngest charge quite breathless at the danger she had escaped. 'Lor! whatever should I have done if master had throwd my keys away?'

She is a comely old lady, of dignified presence, with a brown face and a handsome double chin, aquiline nose, which approaches her chin more closely than of old, owing to her lack of teeth; a very dramatic woman, mind you, full of action and gesture; with it all, a very comfortable motherly body.

'You're quite sure they are your keys, nurse?' said my wife.

'Bless you, yes, ma'm,' said nurse, sinking down into a chair. She is not strong on her pins, and we don't exact rigid ceremony from her. 'Why, I can tell you the history of the whole 'f 'em.'

Mrs. Maycock, like other story-tellers I know, requires very delicate handling. If you let her see that you expect a story from her, she either shuts up altogether or spoils her tale by over-effort. She must be left to herself, and gently incited to discourse of her experiences. To be heard in full perfection, her narrative must flow naturally, from surrounding circumstances.

With the late lamented Maycock I had no personal acquaintance; but I have formed a vivid mental picture of him from his widow's occasional descriptions. He was thin and small, rather lame, a reserved, fiery-tempered man, who had a vivid sense of his own dignity and a rather contemptuous opinion of the female sex. He was an upper workman of some sort, earning good wages and laying-by a little money—a valuable man in his own way, and well thought of by his employers.

To return to nurse. Her attention is diverted for a moment by the youngster on her lap, who makes a desperate pull at her cap-strings, and almost succeeds in demolishing that elaborate fabric.

'Bless his little 'art,' cries nurse; 'ain't he playful, sir? He do take after you, does Master Ralf.'

'I don't see it at all,' says the wife; 'I don't see the least resemblance.'

'But look at his eyes, ma'm, and then his little ways; O, he do take after master, surely. Then he *is* so fond of books.'

'Fond of books, is he?' said I, with a dawning interest in the little chap.

'He just is fond of books,' continued nurse, with pride. 'He's tored all the leaves out of mine.'

His father shuddered, and thought he had better be taken away.

'But about the keys, sir, as I was telling you the way I knows 'em. This here one with the 'ole in it is the key of my chest of drawers. And these two just alike—ah, you sees them two together, sir?'

'Yes, I see them.'

'Well, one of them was poor Maycock's key—the key of his box, where he kep' all his treasures; and, sir, he just were careful of this here key; and this one,' went on nurse, with a twinkle in her eye, 'I had made a purpose exactly like the other, so that I could get at Maycock's box whenever I pleased.'

Mrs. Maycock laughed a jolly laugh, in which I joined. Perhaps if I had owned a bunch of keys of my own I should not have laughed so freely. The wife looked doubtfully at the eldest daughter. Was there any fear of such loose principles being infectious?

'Maycock was very stric', you see, ma'm,' went on nurse, 'and very stingy about his money. So much a week doled out regular every Saturday, and no more if you dies for it, and often enough it wouldn't run to it. Every week a pound; and whether I was brought to bed, or whatever happened, there was no more. So I contrived this here key, as would open his box, and when I really couldn't manage any other way, I'd used to unlock Maycock's box and take out a suvrin; never no more than that, I assure you, ma'm. And I don't think he missed it ever! He took out his money every now and then, when it growd to be a good lump, and divested it somewhere, and then he'd frown and shake his head over his box sometimes, as if he couldn't make it come right; but he never said anything to me, no more did I to him; no, and never breathed a syllable to any living soul how I managed it.'

Here Mrs. Maycock took breath, and then went on:

'But one day I wanted something very bad for my second little girl—a cloak, or a hood, or something: I went to his box and took out a suvrin. His store was got very low then, for there was only three pounds, and when I took mine there was only two, don't you see, sir? Well, after I'd done it I grew frightened, for,

thinks I, perhaps he'll go to his box, and he's sure to recollect as he'd left three there before, and then there'd be a desperate to-do. So what does I do but I gets hold of a new farden, and I slips it into the box along with the two suvrins; and glad I was I done it, for presently in comes Maycock looking as black as you please.

"Master's off to Binchester," says he, "and left word as I'm to follow him; but he ain't left me the money for expenses. Perhaps it'll be a fortnight's job," says he.

"What will you do, Maycock?" says I. Says he, "I must borrow some of my own money." "O," says I, feeling quite faint; but then again, thinks I, he'll never notice it.

'Well, his train didn't go afore a quarter-past seven; but you never did see how he fidgeted. It wasn't five o'clock then, but every minute he calls out, "Jane, what o'clock is it?" and presently he says, "Jane, I must have a shirt and a pair of stockings; p'raps I sha'n't get home next Saturday. Jane," says he, "will you look after that?" "All right," says I. Well, in another quarter of an hour he'd say again, "Jane," says he, "how about that shirt and pair of stockings?" "Bless your 'art," says I, "don't fidget like that;" and then he shuts up for ten minutes and begins again. "Jane," says he, "ain't it time to be getting ready?" And so he kept all on, that I was thankful when the time come for him to start.

"You'll leave me my wages, Maycock?" says I, as he was bustling about. "To be sure," says he, and with that he goes to his box. It was the money as had to keep me and the children for a week, you know, ma'm, and little enough too.

"Well, good-bye, old woman," he says, and gives me a kiss and thrusts something into my hand, and away he goes; and what do you think he'd left me, ma'm? Why, the very identical new farden as I'd put into the box!'

Trivial as this story of Mrs. Maycock's may appear, it bears such an excellent moral, that I make no apology for thus giving it to the world.

THE ASHANTEE COUNTRY

'WHAT! going to Cape Coast Castle? Why, you had better order your coffin at once, and take it out with you! Save trouble, you know, old fellow!'

Such and many similar remarks of an equally cheering character greeted me on the announcement to my friends that my offer of a tour of service on the West Coast of Africa had been accepted by the War Office, and that I was to take my departure by the mail of the 24th of the month for that dreaded colony.

The hope of speedy promotion at that time (1857) held out to officers in the service, as a reward for three years' slavery on the Gold Coast, added to certain advantages and emoluments accorded to the *pauvres diables* willing to risk the climate, were my inducements to accept the proffered appointment. Accordingly, in spite of the protestations and bewailings of those nearest and dearest to me, I prepared for the voyage, and on the day appointed found myself on board the good ship Gambia, *en route* for Africa.

The voyage outwards has been described *in extenso* by scores of travellers (notably by Captain Burton, in his admirable and truthful book, *Wanderings in West Africa*); I shall therefore pass over the various points of stoppage, including Madeira and Teneriffe, those bright gems of the Atlantic, and will suppose myself finally in the roads of Cape Coast Castle, collecting together my various 'impedimenta,' and embarking in the suspicious-looking craft called a canoe, which is to convey me through the raging surf to the old weather-beaten Castle of Cape Coast to be seen shimmering through the tropical haze which ever surrounds it. As we approach it the singular structure of the place, its crumbling batteries and storm-worn bastions, come more clearly into view, and, to the most careless observer, form a striking and venerable object as it stands out defiantly on a solitary mass of rock, a lasting monument and example to the savage tribes around of the white man's power and strength. It was erected by the Portuguese in 1672, and after various vicissitudes fell into our hands. The walls are of enormous thickness, and must have been solidly and laboriously constructed; at what a frightful expense of human life, the spirits of the dead slaves, who worked at it under their cruel taskmasters, alone can tell. But now, in these days of rifled cannon and long ranges, a single gunboat would silence its honeycombed and worn-out batteries in twenty minutes.

The whole of the Gold Coast abounds in these old forts, of which St. George d'Elmina, formerly the Dutch head-quarters, and Cape Coast Castle are the two most important; while along the coast line, from Cape Three Points to the Volta, lie the fortresses (some ruined and untenable, the others thinly garrisoned) of Dixcove, Boutrie, Commenda, Chamah, Moree, Anamaboe, Tantum, Winebah, Accra (two forts), Christiansborg, Addah, and others of lesser importance. The fortresses of Christiansborg and Addah formerly belonged to the Danes, and were purchased by the British Government from them for the sum of ten thousand pounds sterling; but the former, a noble old castle, has since been partially destroyed by the earthquake of 1862.

But to return. On nearing the castle the prospect of the lines of rolling breakers, through which we had to pass before landing, was anything but pleasant. As each stroke of the powerful canoe-men sent the light boat closer and closer to the rock, the black threatening edges of the rollers became more painfully distinct, as, rearing themselves rapidly on high, the waves curled over and broke with a crash like thunder; the showers of spray, which immediately afterwards partly obscured the face of the castle and rock, bearing significant testimony to their force and volume. Suddenly the canoe-men came to a dead stop, and I felt the canoe impelled forward for a short distance by one of the huge rollers, which then passed us, and broke about ten yards ahead with fearful force. Another and another passed us, dark and threatening, when, as we were again lifted by the huge green mass, our men began to pull like fiends, yelling all the time, and, to my inexpressible astonishment, landed me safe and sound on the beach, with the assistance and on the foaming crest of the very billow which appeared to me to threaten our destruction. The skill of these men is proverbial. Their invariable knowledge of the right time to take advantage of a roller can only be gained by long and constant practice; but I regret to state that they will not unfrequently capsize the canoe purposely, either from a motive of private spite against their passenger, or in order to extort from a half-drowned wretch a gratuity for 'saving his life.' They themselves, being quite as much at home in the water as on land, of course are in no danger; but to those less experienced the difficulty of falling clear of the canoe, and of avoiding a blow on the head from the keel, is great; and not long since a white trader was killed by such an accident.

On our arrival ashore the hubbub was deafening; crowds of canoe-men, black soldiers, and fishwomen yelled and screeched in concert, and it was only by the timely advent of a brother officer that I was enabled to extricate myself and baggage from the mob, and get up to the quarters prepared to receive me. The less said about these quarters the better, but they were the best to be got for

money (love being, even in those days, at a discount on the West Coast). I became a member of the mess of the Gold Coast Artillery, —a capital mess it was, by the bye,—and found the bright lights, cool room, the good wines, and cheerful conversation a most agreeable change from the monotony of a sea voyage. My first impressions, then, of Western Africa were quite at variance with the dismal picture I had been forming on the outward voyage, and contributed much to reconcile me to the thought of the long stay which I was to make on that coast. But, alas, this bright scene was but the gilding to the pill—a very bitter pill to many poor fellows who have died there, or who consider themselves fortunate to have escaped with life and the knowledge that their constitutions are irretrievably shattered. Verily, it is a fearful climate, from the effects of which but few who have experienced it fail to suffer.

After a few days' stay I was enabled to settle down in my house, and had then leisure to observe and examine the country, and to make myself partly acquainted with the manners and customs of the Fantees.

The town of Cape Coast, and indeed all the principal settlements of the Gold Coast, impress the newly-arrived traveller with a sense of present ruin and past grandeur; and a knowledge of their history by no means detracts from the correctness of this impression. The contrasts are striking. Side by side with the filthy little mud huts of the Fantees—very like roofless Irish cabins, only a trifle dirtier, perhaps—stand the remains of residences almost palatial in their size and structure, but bearing generally painful evidences of their fall from their once high estate. Shutters hanging from their hinges, rotting doors, broken staircases, worm-eaten furniture and pictures, battered plate and broken crockery of expensive patterns, all bear witness to the 'days that are no more,' of the time when Cape Coast was inhabited by princely merchants, keeping up a lavish hospitality to all comers, and when the fame of its luxury went abroad, even to England. Those days are now past; and, excepting the representatives of one or two English houses, a host of petty swindling traders, white and black, sit in the high places, and ape European gentility. The costly mansions have gone to decay, and will soon be numbered, like their owners, with the past.

The country around Cape Coast Castle is composed of low hills, lining the coast, and covered with short, stunted, impenetrable brushwood, the haunt of wild animals and snakes without number. These hills, in their turn, give way, as the traveller proceeds inland, to forests boundless, and in many instances pathless, of which the timber is immense. Beautiful to the eye is nature in these vast solitudes; but it is a fatal and a poisonous beauty. Every breath is laden with malaria, and the luxuriant exuberance of the vegetation

is owing to a subsoil of rotting vegetable matter, which accumulates continually and steadily from the falling leaves and decayed branches of the forest giants around. Through parts of these forests wind little narrow roads, or paths, about a foot wide and two feet deep, like drains; these are the only communications from village to village, and during the rainy season are generally knee-deep in a compost of mud and water.

I was greatly disappointed on my arrival with the want of game of every kind,—not that I believe there is any scarcity of animal life, but the impenetrable nature of the country, while it affords a sure and safe harbour to wild animals and birds, forms a complete barrier to the sportsman, no matter how enterprising he may be. How often have I, armed with a short 'machete,' or sword, endeavoured to cut my way through the tangle of underwood and bush-rope which beset my footsteps, and, after an hour's hard work, when desisting in sheer weariness from the effort, have made the discovery that I had advanced only about a hundred yards into the forest; or, still more pleasing conviction, that I had lost my way, and should in all probability have to go through the same labour to cut my way out again! Shooting in the neighbourhood of Cape Coast Castle is a mistake. The determined sportsman had better confine himself to the shores of the Salt Lake or lagoon, and to the massacre of cautious curlews, and screaming gulls or plover, of which, at certain seasons, he will find a fair quantity.

But it is to the naturalist that a fine field opens for his labours, rather than to the sportsman. Insect and vegetable life is endless and exhaustless; and a very short walk will take him into shady and thickly-grown dells, where strange ferns, euphorbias, and weird-looking evil-smelling plants will occupy his time for weeks, amid the buzz of countless beetles and the flutter of innumerable unknown butterflies and moths. What is that huge insect crawling on the stem of that giant parasite? Stop and admire his rich colouring, the mingled cream-coloured and black velvet of his broad clytra, his shining claws, his busy head working in the crevices of the huge wax-like leaves. See, he spreads his bronzed wings to fly away; but don't let him escape, for he is a glorious specimen of the magnificent 'Goliathus Druryi,' the prince of the beetle creation, and a valuable prize to your collection. The value of these beetles has diminished of late years, owing to the greatly-increased traffic and steam communications with England, and they can now be purchased in Europe at 5*s.* or 10*s.* a head; but tremendous legends are extant of 25*l.*, 30*l.*, and even 50*l.* being offered and refused for occasional specimens. The handsome 'Savagii,' in all his glories of green and gold, may also be found; but he must not be confounded with the 'Polyphemus,' his first cousin, who is as common as 'Savagii' is rare. The shining and prismatic 'Sagridæ' are

comparatively common; while Cetonidæ, Lucanidæ, Carabi, 'et hoc genus omne,' are to be found in considerable numbers by the diligent collector. Butterflies of every description, huge moths six and eight inches across the wings, Orthoptera, and Diptera, are abundant and interesting; and many new species and varieties will reward a really scientific and careful search.

Again, the small streams, at some little distance from Cape Coast, abound with curious and valuable fish, mostly unknown to the naturalist, and consequently they are much sought after and valued in England. For the purpose of obtaining these it is advisable to employ the services of the natives.

One of the most interesting objects at Cape Coast is the grave of the well-known poetess, L. E. L., and no stranger is allowed to leave without visiting the spot. The sweetness of her writings and her early sudden death from poison unite to throw a romantic halo around the desolate spot. Her husband was the Administrator here in those days; and Miss Landon, upon her marriage, had devotedly accompanied him to shores where but few European ladies can endure the climate. But for her there was a swifter cause of death even than the climate. An emptied laudanum bottle found by her side persuaded her friends that in the endeavour to soothe the pain of tooth-ache, from which she was suffering, she had taken an overdose of the 'drowsy sirup.'

Proceeding eastwards from Cape Coast Castle, along the coast, to the mouth of the river Volta, a very sensible change is observed in the character of the country. The low scrubby hills gradually yield to pleasing verdant plains, dotted here and there with clumps of trees, and bounded by the distant swelling hills of Aquapim. This decided improvement begins to be perceived at Mumford and Winebah, small trading settlements; and, becoming more apparent as the traveller progresses eastward, the open and breezy plains of Accra reward the eye of the traveller, wearied with the monotony of the scrub and sand fringing the Fantee seaboard.

On reaching Accra, the same appearance of modern poverty and ancient grandeur struck me which forms so remarkable a feature in the aspect of the town of Cape Coast. Indeed, Accra, on a close acquaintance, may be said to possess this peculiarity in a greater degree than the first-named town; principally, doubtless, on account of the greater number of decaying mansions which have been erected here by former merchants. The greatly superior healthiness of Accra, and its charming environs, will easily account for the preference which appears throughout to have been accorded to it by the white settlers. At the present time, a fortnight's trip to Accra is a great restorer of health to the dwellers in Cape Coast, as I have frequently found to my own advantage. The town of Accra was divided in my time into two parts, Dutch and English Accra;

and over each portion a commandant of each nation ruled supreme. On my arrival at Accra, I proceeded at once to Christiansborg Castle, the old Danish possession, situate about three miles off. There was not a more picturesque object upon the coast than this glorious old pile, jutting out into the sea, and standing in solitary majesty amidst the surrounding level plains, 'monarch of all it surveyed.' Poor old Christiansborg! The terrible shock of earthquake of 1862 shook it to its foundations, and it is now a howling wilderness, the abode of the night-birds, snakes, and rats which tenant this favoured region. A corporal's guard keeps solitary watch over its dismantled battlements, and its beautiful brass guns, of exquisite workmanship, but upwards of one hundred years old, and, therefore of little use in the present conflict, are stowed away in the barrack-yard at Cape Coast Castle. It is to be hoped that the gallant defenders of that besieged town may not have occasion to use them, for they would probably do them more damage than service.

At the time I went to Christiansborg a very happy party tenanted its spacious old chambers, and of these, my particular friend and companion in all my expeditions in the surrounding country was Dr. E——, an assistant surgeon in medical charge of the detachment there quartered. He was an ardent naturalist and sportsman, and a giant in frame and constitution; indeed, I owe my preservation on one occasion to his bodily endurance and pluck, at a time when my debilitated frame was sinking under fatigue and exhaustion.

The sportsman at Accra has good opportunities. Game of almost every kind abounds in the plains, and is comparatively easy of access. Leopards, servals, hyenas, antelopes of many kinds, from the tiny mouse-deer no bigger than a hare to the spotted 'harnessed antelope;' hares (smaller and redder than our English rodent), wild cats, genets, bustards, francolins, quails, pigeons, and a host of other beasts and birds, are tolerably well scattered over the vicinity of Accra, and become plentiful as you proceed a few miles into the country. Consequently, I found the mess-table of Christiansborg generally well supplied by the guns of such unerring shots as the colonel and major. On one occasion, indeed, I remember going out with my above-mentioned chum, and killing more partridges and pigeons than we could carry; but since then the game in the immediate neighbourhood of Accra has become comparatively scarce, owing to the wholesale warfare carried on against it, by every 'pot-hunter' who can sport a gun and creep behind a bush.

The rising of a covey of francolins, or, as they are there called, 'bushfowl,' can only be compared to the same number of cock-pheasants rising around and about you; and many a good partridge shot, who would not be discomposed by the simultaneous whirring of half the coveys in Norfolk, has found himself sufficiently flur-

ried by the unexpected appearance of half-a-dozen bushfowl to miss with both barrels. They are also extremely difficult to find unless killed outright, as they crawl into the dense bush and grass, where nothing but a retriever will find them; and retrievers are not to be had in West Africa, where European dogs live a very short time. When bagged, however, these bushfowl are really noble birds, although of sober hue, about the size of a big cock-grouse, and double spurred. I fancy they are the 'F. Rüppellii' of naturalists, and have observed a couple in the British Museum in good preservation.

The hyenas are very troublesome, and occasionally dangerous, for although singly they will not attack a man, they will follow him in pairs; and when in troops they will set upon him without hesitation. An unfortunate black missionary, who was walking during the night—the favourite time for travel—along the sea-coast from Winebah to Accra, was attacked by about half-a-dozen 'pattacoos,' as they are called by the natives, and the luckless gentleman had to wade into the sea up to his waist, in danger of sharks, and at the risk of being swept off by each heavy roller, until the simultaneous arrival of the dawn and a few native fishermen released him from his perilous position. The pattacoo ('Hyæna crocata') is particularly fond of following travellers on horseback, and the rider is always in great danger on these occasions, as his frightened steed is likely to unseat him. Should he be stunned by the fall, the hyenas would at once dispatch him. Fortunately, the brutes only come out at nightfall. On one occasion I had to ride from Accra home to Christiansborg at eleven o'clock P.M. I had not proceeded a quarter of a mile from the town before the horse showed most unmistakable signs of fear, and began at last to tremble in every limb, refusing to go forwards or backwards. After considerable coaxing I got him on at a smart gallop, but as I got into the open country, I could easily perceive two pattacoos, one on each side of me, keeping up an easy canter on the edge of the road. The perspiration began to roll down my face; I was quite unarmed, and altogether new to this kind of adventure. Fear seemed to lend my horse wings; and when at last I spied the huge castle of Christiansborg before me, a welcome haven of refuge did it appear! The daring brutes, however, did not desist from their pursuit until they came within a hundred yards of the castle, and the sentry on guard at the gate distinctly saw them halt and slink away.

On another occasion I strayed away some distance from the castle, in search of game, farther than I had at first supposed, and sunset found me a good two miles from Christiansborg, in a couple of hundred acres of short brushwood, waist-high. Proceeding onwards through this to the plain before me, with my gun under my arm, I became suddenly aware of a rustling, pattering noise about ten paces from me. I stopped; the noise ceased. Cocking my

double-barrel, I proceeded cautiously on through the deepening gloom, but I had not gone two steps before the noise recommenced, and continued to accompany me until, after some time, and greatly to my relief, I at last reached the plain, where my servant was waiting for me with my horse. Turning sharply round, I plainly distinguished two burning eyes in the thick scrub. Instantly I brought my gun to my shoulder, and pulled the trigger, but a faint snap and click was the only sound elicited by the proceeding, and on trying the other barrel a similar result followed. It had been raining heavily in the morning, and the damp had penetrated under the caps. A pretty fix I should have been in had the beast attacked me. I told my servant of it. The black said, 'Ah! dat pattacoo, massa, for true. Suppose massa go much furder, dem d— brute try for chop* you, sar.'

In a country like West Africa, anything, however trivial and unimportant, which would serve to break the monotony of life, or rather existence, was eagerly welcomed. Sport was at once the most important and the most healthful of these recreations; and from Christiansborg I made daily shooting excursions to Labadic with my above-mentioned friend. On one occasion, however, I remember that we extended our sphere of operations to Kechachu,† a little native village ten miles off, where we enjoyed for two days the best of sport, deer being very plentiful. In addition to that, we had possession of the best mud hut in the place, as the village was empty, in consequence of the whole of the population having gone to some Fetish rites at a town twelve miles distant. We were as surprised as delighted to find ourselves free from the native inhabitants; and having, of course, taken the precaution to send forward everything that we required, made the best of life in Kechachu.

It may perhaps not be uninteresting to give an account of the preparations necessary for two men going even such a short journey as ten miles amongst a friendly tribe in search of sport; and from that to form some idea of the difficulties attendant upon the warfare upon which we are at present engaged, with a king whose predecessor, in a war with Denkira in 1720, lost 100,000 men, and was nevertheless victorious. First, of course, takes place a general over-hauling of guns, shot-pouches, and powder-flasks. Quashie and Quamina, our boys, had an evil time of it in running to and from Accra for hammock-men, for powder, and various things. A couple of hammocks and the requisite number of bearers having been engaged, and our preparations having been completed, at three o'clock in the afternoon the jabbering and fighting of the hammock-men outside our door warned us that it was time to take our departure. Accordingly, the lightest and weakest of our bearers were sent on to Kechachu, laden with the creature comforts destined to support us

* Eat. † Kĕchāchŭ.

during our two days' sojourn at the village; and having seen the last carrier off with the champagne, a most necessary article in that country, we finally climbed into our hammocks, and were jolted along at the rate of five miles an hour through the broad grassy plain of Accra.

A final word as to this hammock-travelling. To the initiated and experienced coaster no mode of travelling is so pleasant and easy, although at first the singular motion of the hammock produces in most people a feeling akin to sea-sickness. The hammock is generally made of strong netted cord, or coarse cloth, and decorated according to the means or fancy of the owner. This receptacle is slung on a long bamboo pole, which is balanced on the heads or shoulders of the carriers. A strong canvas awning, with lines attached for its adjustment (something like a boat-awning), is fixed over the head of the traveller, and a couple of pillows under his head complete the arrangement. The bearers go at a long swinging trot, at a pace which would tax the strongest European walking powers to match, and which, considering the burden these men carry, and the character of the ground they traverse, is little less than marvellous. Thirty miles a day is very ordinary travelling; and this computation allows for a long mid-day halt, generally from ten o'clock A.M. till three o'clock P.M., during which the bearers are allowed to rest from the excessive heat. The usual hours for progress are from four until nine o'clock in the morning, and from three until seven o'clock or more at night; and many of the hammock-men, in true African fashion, prefer travelling all night and sleeping all day. Should the traveller prefer it, he can sleep very comfortably in the hammock, subject, however, to occasional disturbances, such as having to turn out to cross a stream or climb over a fallen tree.

The above, and many other adventures of more or less interest, befell me during my fifteen years' stay in those wild and uncivilised lands; but I always recall them with pleasure, and have willingly shared with the indulgent reader the feelings their recollection awakens in my breast. To the general public, until lately, little was known about the West Coast beyond the two facts that it was very unhealthy, and that gold dust came from there. Perhaps, therefore, to so slight a knowledge even the above remarks may prove a welcome addition.

HER MASTER

BY MRS. C. READE, AUTHOR OF 'SWIFT AS A FLASH,' ETC.

IN TWO PARTS:—PART II.

CHAPTER I. IN THE STREAM.

'So this friend of yours wants work!'

Dessert is on the parlour table,—a dessert of apricots, of gooseberries, of huge white currants. It is Sunday afternoon; the sun pours hotly down upon the green-and-white-and-red-striped awnings shading the windows. The world is fast asleep, and the flesh and the devil have given up humanity as impracticable for the present. There is a delicious laziness abroad in the land, a sense of slumbrous happiness, of mute deep joy of life. Even Judith owns the spell; even Judith finds delight in this summer's day, albeit care weights her heart, and her forehead is aflame.

She has just plunged *in medias res*. She has just told Ralph how an old friend of hers, William Durran by name, called on her yesterday and asked for work; how work is very needful to him, needful being daily bread. She has just set her tongue to that unpleasant task, the thought of which kept her waking during the best part of yesternight; and Ralph—. Well, Ralph has listened to her stammering tale patiently, as a strong man is wont to listen, and he has consumed a second apricot, and has drunk two glasses of claret (he prefers indubitable claret to questionable port and sherry, this plain yeoman of ours), and he is now prepared to say yea or nay.

'What sort of work is he fit for?' inquires he, leaning back in his chair and looking across at his housekeeper, in her glossy flowing dress and soft white ruffles.

'I'm sure I don't know—he is clever and willing.'

'Such fellows generally are. You say he is well educated?'

'Yes.'

'Not a gentleman, I hope?'

She is silent for a few seconds, then she replies, looking away at the gold-and-white fuzzy stuff in the grate:

'He is not a gentleman now, whatever he may have been once.'

Mr. Considine grunts; he is an eminently practical person, and possesses small liking for prodigals. 'Well! we'll give him a job or two to begin with,' says he presently, however.

'You will?' cries Judith, her face all aglow with delight.

From some unexplained cause or other, Mr. Durran's future would seem to be of great account to her.

Her master eyes her curiously.

'Certainly I will,' he asseverates; 'I should not like to be hard on a friend of yours. By the way, you haven't told me how old he is though.'

'Just five years younger than I am, that is twenty-five, you know,' she replies, setting her elbow on the table, and resting her chin on the palm of her hand.

'O!' a dry 'O!' It strikes him as rather odd that she should measure this ne'er-do-weel's age by her own; and the oddity is disagreeable,—why, he does not care to investigate.

'I hope you are not offended at my telling him to call to-morrow morning. I thought— That is— I—'

'O, not at all; much the best way. Isn't it vilely hot?' and Mr. Considine walks away to the window, wiping his forehead.

But Judith is far too well pleased with her own doings and sayings to observe how cross he looks, or note the acerbity of his tone. She has actually crossed the Rubicon, she has vanquished the dread monster Uncertainty, she is at peace with herself again for a while. Perhaps you think her, as I do, the veriest simpleton for believing in the piecrust promises of a shallow rogue; but you know it is a woman's nature to believe, to hope, to pray,—and Judith is but a woman after all, so she feels almost happy this July Sabbath afternoon.

'Do you want anything else, sir?' demands she, rising from the table. She is a model servant.

'No,' he answers, with his back to her.

'You would like tea at half-past five?'

'Yes.'

A light rustling sound, a gently closed door, and she is gone, fled away into the haven of her own mind, that pleasantest of refuges to a thoughtful harmless mortal.

Ralph sticks his hands in his trousers-pockets and takes a turn about the room. The expression of his countenance is not amiable. Then he flings himself down in the big leathern arm-chair and pulls out his never-failing consoler. How many men owe sanity to nicotine?

Sunday is always a very still day at the White Farm. No clicking of pattens or other mundane noises disturb its serenity, Eunice talks in a measured quakerish voice, Jim refrains from laughter and grins with judgment, and Mr. Considine wears a frock-coat. Judith enjoys the restful season. She is prone to enjoy what there is to enjoy, poor soul, perhaps from lack of enjoyable things; and as she lounges half asleep upon that cosy window-seat in her

own little chamber, she knows that she is very glad to be alive, glad to her heart's core, the deluded fool!

Ralph does not go to church this evening, neither does he appear particularly desirous of human companionship, strolling round and about the premises with Jack at his heels, and a ragamuffin gray wideawake on his head, as sulky and as disagreeable as the most thoroughbred farmer in the United Kingdom could possibly desire to be.

Chapter II.

BITTER BLOSSOM.

Before Miss Scott has poured out the tea on Monday morning Mr. Durran re-presents himself at the White Farm back-door. He is, however, wonderfully improved in his outer man since Saturday night. Tidy fustian clothes have replaced his seedy black attire, a yellow straw hat with a blue ribbon round the crown decorates his head, his face is guiltless of beard and dirt, his boots of holes; indeed, were you to look upon him now for the first time you would think him, as does Eunice, a respectable out-door servant of any age under thirty and over twenty.

'Please to tell Miss Scott that William Durran has called,' says he, eyeing her rosy visage admiringly.

'Yes, sir,' blushes Eunice. The man's manner of speech is above his appearance, and induces her to be extra civil; and away she hurries to the parlour, whence proceeds an appetising smell of ham and eggs.

'Please, 'm, William Durran 'ave called,' she announces, popping in her head at the door. Judith keeps her eyes on her plate. Eunice still holds the door-handle.

'That's the man you were speaking to me about yesterday?' interrogates Mr. Considine.

'Yes.'

'Tell him to wait a moment. I'll speak to him directly I've finished my breakfast.'

'Yes, sir;' and away goes the girl to give the message.

There is silence in the dining-room after her departure; an oppressive meaningful silence, which seems to Judith worse, far worse, than the cruellest speech. Mr. Considine labours under no such sentimental fancy. He has already eaten one egg and a rasher of bacon, and he intends to eat another before he quits the table, wherefore he abandons conversation for food, without a thought in his head of anything more exalted than his appetite, which is superb.

'There,' exclaims he at length, laying down his knife and fork; 'now I'll go and have a talk with this fellow. Pour me out another cup of tea, please. It'll get cool by the time I come back;' and he gives her his big green cup.

'I do hope you won't regret—being so kind!' hesitates Judith, raising her anxious eyes to his.

'What nonsense! I'm always glad to give a man work when I can. There's nothing particularly kind about that;' smiling rarely. She smiles too. It is not easy to be gloomy within earshot of Ralph Considine. Then he walks out of the room and across the hall, the green-baize door swings-to behind him, and she knows no more.

Three whole minutes spent in utter idleness, trying to guess the upshot of this portentous interview. She has done her share—wisely or foolishly, she hardly likes to think. It is a terrible thing to bid a fellow-creature go starve. It is also a terrible thing to bring misfortune, loss, upon a friend. A deep, deep sigh, and—

'Shall I clear away now, 'm?' Eunice enters the room, Miss Scott descends from the clouds, and they begin packing up the breakfast-things.

'I fancy master's hired that there man,' remarks the girl presently. 'Leastways, I 'eerd um say as I comes through the stone parlour, "So you'll be content with ten shillings a week to begin with?"'

'Indeed!' says Judith, trying to seem careless. 'Take care, that butter-dish is unsafe!' pointing to it, as she sets Mr. Considine's cup on the sideboard.

Eunice re-arranges the tray, and asks for orders for dinner.

'I'll tell you by and by,' is the rather impatient rejoinder.

Eunice and her tinkling burden out of sight and hearing, Judith walks restlessly about the room. Were you to promise her a thousand pounds if she would only sit still during the next five minutes, she could not do so.

'All right then! I'll show you what you've got to do in a minute or two. Here, Eunice, set out some bread and cheese and beer in the kitchen, and look sharp about it.' It is her master who is speaking.

Judith's teeth meet inside her compressed lips, and her eyes grow hard, nay, fierce. So then William Durran is to work on the White Farm, is to be daily, hourly within her ken, is to— Good God! what is this that she has done? For once she violently longs to be a wicked woman, a wicked, merciless, unscrupulous woman: but she may long; wickedness is not the mushroom growth of one bad hour.

'Well, it's settled!' exclaims Ralph cheerily as he comes across the hall, the dining-room door being open. 'I've taken Durran on as under-gardener, groom, anything—sort of help to Jim, you know;' and he begins to drink his tea.

'Thank you,' replies she constrainedly. 'Where is he?'

'In the kitchen having some breakfast—do you want to see him?'

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r best to lag me if I don't?'
to the man I serve, let it cost what it
brightly.

'Your duty! Yes; you've done your duty admirably. You've kept my house to perfection, and you've worked hard early and late, and you've always been punctiliously agreeable and good-tempered!' laughing rather bitterly.

'Well, and what more can you want?' demands she, turning round upon him, her eyes bright and big.

But her irritation is gratuitous, he is not wont to be much moved by the emotions of his fellow-creatures. She turns away from him with a jerk. She is exceeding wroth with him, with herself, with all creation.

'I've offended you?' adventures he presently.

No answer.

His face changes.

'Can you manage to let me have dinner exactly at one?' he says, getting up and going to the door.

'I will see that the dinner is punctual,' she replies without raising her eyes, and the door shuts with a snap.

Stiff-necked Miss Scott!

'What a one to talk that there strange young fellow be!' remarks Eunice somewhat later, shelling broad beans hard and fast. 'I never did 'ear the likes of 'im, and I've 'eerd a good few too.'

Judith smiles; she is skimming the fat off some boiling stock, and has her back turned to her handmaiden.

'What did he say?' she asks, replacing the saucepan-lid and wiping her greasy fingers.

'O, there; I can't remember not the 'arf of what 'e said, but 'e were very cur'us about master and you, and 'ow we lived, and all such things as that.'

Rattle, rattle fall the beans into the dish.

'Indeed! and what did you tell him?'

'Well, I didn't care to tell 'im much. Mother always says as strangers is best when you knows 'em, so I let 'im 'ave 'is say, and there was an end on't!'

'Your mother's quite right, Eunice;' this is spoken with intention.

''E 'ad a lot to say about the races too,' continues Eunice, after a short pause devoted to gathering up the empty bean-pods lying about the floor. 'I wonder if 'e's got anythin' to do with them there ruffins o' bettin'-men?'

Some one thinks that there is very little doubt to be entertained on that score: but she keeps her thoughts to herself, wise soul! so Eunice's suggestion goes for what it is worth.

The day is perfect of its kind, a gray hushed expectant kind, like the last moment of a tedious hour, the season just before a great joy comes. Judith looks abroad and sees the earth is fair; she wonders what Woodend is like; how far it is away. She wonders if—if—

'You've done your duty by recommending me.'

'Yes, I have in one way;' looking him straight in the eyes.

'And now I suppose you're going to do it in the other. You're a nice sort of a— Hark!'

The stable bell rings loud and long.

'Mr. Considine has come home, and Jim is up the village. Go and take the horse!' this authoritatively. Somehow she is stronger than he, despite his bullying tone.

'All right,' he answers; 'I say, you won't split on me, you won't get me turned out, will you? It's bread to me!' piteously.

'Go.' And the bell peals out again.

One look at her white cold face, cold as stone; then he starts off up the path at a run.

'O God!' groans she, when he is fairly out of sight. 'What have I done—what have I done?'

Chapter III.

AT THE GOLD BARS.

Another Monday. William Durran has been on the farm a week. Mr. Considine has already informed Judith that he is likely to retain his services, and she has thanked him in the lacklustre sort of way which has become her habitual manner of speech of late. Sometimes, too, he will ask a chance question about the man's antecedents, but she is not disposed to be communicative thereanent, and he gets but small returns for his pains. Occasionally she encounters the subject of them in the kitchen; he is fond of a 'shackle' with Eunice it seems,—rather too fond Judith fears for that young person's future peace of mind; or in the garden hoeing and weeding, but a brief 'good-morning' is the sum total as a rule of their amenities, and were it not that the knowledge of his vicinity alone is sufficient to make her miserable, she would apparently have no just cause to regret the exercise of her good offices on his behalf.

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shape. Viciously she eyes the incongruous heap before her, for a second she thinks she will fling it, plate and all, clean out of window, she is as wild as that; but then habitual self-restraint taps her on the shoulder, and what do you think she does? Why, she hides her poor troubled face in her hands and begins to cry—to cry just like a weak little miss in her teens, instead of a staid hireling of thirty.

'Do you know where the *Field*— Why! what—' Mr. Considine has just popped in his head to ask for his well-beloved newspaper, and he stands with his hand on the door, gazing on the unwonted spectacle of his housekeeper in tears, with a bewildered expression quite comical to behold. But Judith doesn't behold it. She is shaking all over with dreadful shuddering sobs—such sobs as Ralph has only heard once before in his life, namely, when one of his labourers was torn to pieces by a threshing-machine, and his widow, little more than a bride, came out to meet the mangled corpse of her lover-husband as the rest of the men carried it home to her cottage. That woman sobbed as Judith is now sobbing—as one whose misery is greater than her strength.

'What can I do for you?' asks he coming forward, and her sorrow has got into his face somehow.

She walks away to the window, wiping her eyes. She knows that if she speaks she will cry again. He follows her. 'Shall I get you a glass of wine? You are over tired. Do sit down;' and he lays his hand on her shoulder. She trembles beneath his touch.

'Please don't mind me,' says she, catching her breath.

'But I do mind you—perhaps more than I mind anything else, Judith!' and he would put his strong arm round her, but she twists herself away from him, in a sort of unconscious way, as if she did not wish to rebuke him otherwise than tacitly.

Mr. Considine accepts his repulse. Perhaps he recognises the fact that persistence must end in driving her out of his house, out of the reach of his eyes altogether.

'I am better now,' observes she presently. 'I can't think what came over me!' trying to smile. O, the hypocrite!

'You want more fresh air and exercise,' he replies, as gravely as though she were his grandmother.

She sets that unsuccessful flower-plate in the centre of the table, and begins gathering together all the scraps of leaves and stalks.

He watches her silently for some seconds. Then he turns himself about, and searches vaguely for something on a table near the door.

'What do you want?' she asks, pushing back the roughened hair from her forehead.

'Nothing; don't trouble, thanks. Here it is;' and he pounces on the *Field*. Another minute and he is gone. Then Judith knows exactly how very great a change has come upon her life.

J. A. Pasquier, del.

Edmund Evans, sc.

JUDITH IN TEARS.

'O, you will, will you? Do you know that I've got a great mind to give you a taste of my tender mercies beforehand, just to refresh your memory?' and he glances slyly at that scar of hers. 'What right have you to dictate to me what I shall do or what I sha'n't do?' in a fierce low voice, more like the growl of a wild beast than the articulate utterance of a human being.

'I have given you bread to eat.'

'Curse you! don't I work for it? don't I have to live like a hog among hogs for it? Ain't I to get what good there is to be got out of it all? And wait a bit. We'll see who's the best man presently!' and Mr. Durran grins triumphantly.

'What do you mean?'

'I know what I mean, and so will you when the proper time comes!' with a chuckling evil laugh.

Pat, pat come great paws up the road. Jack is out for an airing like the rest of the world, it seems; and so is his master, who just then makes his appearance, his pipe in his mouth and his hands in his pockets as usual.

'Get out, you brute!' mutters Mr. Durran as Jack snuffs round him inquisitively, and up goes his clenched fist.

The dog's eyes flame, and he gives a short, sharp, savage bark.

Miss Scott watches him without a word.

'You're an ugly devil if ever there was one,' exclaims the aggressor, trying to look brave and magnificent, and failing dismally.

Jack glares ferociously, and sways to and fro on those strong sinewy black-and-tan legs of his. He is evidently in two minds as to whether the game of mauling this tipsy ruffian is or is not worth the candle.

'Come in, sir! Come in! Quiet, dog!' Mr. Considine's command turns the scale. Jack puts off dismembering the tipsy ruffian until a more convenient season, and goes to heel with a sullen growl. 'I should not advise you to meddle with him,' adds Ralph coolly; 'he has an unpleasant way of fastening on a man's throat when he is out of temper, which you might not find agreeable.'

'Perhaps a bit of meat nicely peppered with a little strychnine might cure his complaint, sir?' laughs Mr. Durran, examining the sole of one of his boots.

'I should be sorry for the man who administered the dose,' is the calm and smiling reply.

Dead silence.

Just then, to Judith's intense relief, Jim lumbers up in his usual lopsided awkward way, and touching his hat, announces somewhat feebly—Jim is not th[illegible] of mankind—that 'Jenkins

'as called to know if 'e might 'ave a drop o' port-wine, as 'is missus be desperate bad in 'er inside?'

'Certainly,' answers Ralph, who supplies port-wine to the whole parish, as also most other extraneous varieties of the meat that perisheth, be it observed.

Here Jack bounds forward to leap upon Jim, for whom he entertains the liveliest affection. As they indulge in a rough-and-tumble passage of arms, their master remarks, a trifle sardonically:

'Durran thinks that poison would be the best cure for his high spirits, Jim!'

'Indeed, sir! I should say as poison 'ud cure worse things nor 'igh spirrits!' replies Jim, with a vengeful glare at his rival.

Mr. Considine bursts out laughing; he is one of those aggravating mortals who must have their joke, let it cost what it may.

Durran laughs too, but after a fashion which makes one person's blood run cold to hear, and that person does not pertain unto the masculine gender.

'Every dog has his day, and a cat has nine afternoons,' says he dryly.

'Suppose a Tom don't count?' remarks Jim, grinning from ear to ear.

'Well,' says Ralph, 'I must go back to the house and see about this wine. Good-night.'

Durran raises his straw hat and walks on towards the high-road; Jim and Miss Scott set their faces the other way.

'Deuced odd thing to say!' breaks at length from Ralph's lips as they stroll along towards the house, Jack at their heels.

'What?' inquires Judith, looking up at him wonderingly.

'Why, about poisoning the dog. Do you know, I don't half like that fellow, though he is your friend. No, not friend—hanger-on—dependent—protégé!' not without contempt.

'What is it that—that—' Her face is as white as a sheet, and she stammers painfully.

'What is it that I dislike in him? Well, I can't quite put it into words, but somehow he doesn't impress me favourably. What's your opinion, Jim?' turning to that worthy.

Jim raises his greasy cap, and rubs up his hair meditatively.

'Well, I wouldn't like to be mischief-makin',' says he; 'but I think as 'e's a reg'lar bad un!'

Mr. Considine smiles.

'I wish the races were well over,' he remarks as they were near the house.

And a great sigh bursts up from Judith's heart. She is afraid she knows not of what. She feels as though she were in the dark alone with some hideous monster, some ghastly horror; she is indeed a sad and lonely soul.

Chapter V.

AS AN EMBER AMONG ASHES.

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, pass in their usual monotonous fashion. Eunice and Miss Scott bake and wash and iron and fuss about the house as indefatigably as heretofore. Perhaps there is a little less talk between them when they are alone; perhaps Eunice feels that confidential communications are not likely to be productive of greater cordiality; perhaps Judith has a lecture ready on the tip of her tongue which keeps back lighter words; anyhow they are certainly more silent than has been their wont. Jim rarely shows his face in the kitchen now, and when he does do so he is pretty sure to find Mr. Durran lurking about somewhere by the backdoor. That gentleman never gets on so well with Eunice as when her old flame is by; at other times she is shrewish enough with him, and flings his soft nothings back in his face with a vigour and persistency which encourage Judith to hope that Jim may not die a bachelor after all.

It is Saturday evening, a rainy Saturday evening, dark and dismal. Judith is busy looking through her housekeeping books, and marking off certain accounts which have been settled by her master in the town to-day. The scene of her labours is that master's own little den, and he is as usual smoking by the window.

'Have you told Eunice that she is to stay at home on Monday?' he asks suddenly, taking his pipe from his mouth and looking round at her, as she tries to fathom the mystery of a doubtful pound of long sixes.

'No, sir!' answers she in a tone of surprise.

'Then you can do so. Jim will stay too.'

'But they'll both be so dreadfully disappointed about not going to the races.'

'Let them!' Puff.

'I'm really not afraid of being left by myself, sir. If I were, I should ask you to take me with you.'

He makes no reply, but he looks as if he might rescind his previous offer were she to commit such an indiscretion; he does not look too amiable, in fact.

'Does that fellow Durran expect a holiday?'

'I know nothing about what he expects,' she answers rather sourly, opening the red-backed butcher's book.

'I sha'n't keep him on after harvest. There's nothing for him to do here.'

'I thought you found him useful in the garden?'

Mr. Considine shrugs his broad shoulders.

'I can't afford to keep two gardeners. This is not a gentleman's place.'

She is silent. God knows she is willing enough that the man should go—go unto the uttermost ends of the earth, and never come near her more; but—a cruel far-reaching 'but,' burdened by grimmest possibilities.

'Did you pay Atkins, sir?' inquires she presently, changing a 5 to a 3 in the sum total of a page of items.

'Yes; I paid away nearly all the money I took out of the bank. I always do on the market-day before the races; it isn't safe to keep much in the house at that time. There are too many murderous rascals about.'

'I shouldn't say that they'd trouble us. This is such an out-of-the-way place.'

'Bless you, they pick up their information correctly enough.'

Judith goes on with her arithmetic.

'If I were you, I should drop that fellow after he leaves here. Take my word for it, he'll never come to any good.'

'Are you speaking of William Durran?'

'Who else should I be speaking of?'

'He has been idle and reckless, but I never heard anything worse about him,' she rejoins, drawing cabalistic characters on a bit of blotting-paper.

'It won't be long before you do, if I'm not mistaken; and, after all, you can't care much about a vagabond like that!' he says, with quick, fierce scorn, turning round to look at her.

She flushes brow-high.

'A friend is a friend!' says she, keeping her eyes on the table.

Mr. Considine laughs ironically.

'Why do you laugh in that way, sir?' she asks, stung to sudden wrath by his mockery.

He laughs again, and picks up his wideawake from the window-seat.

'If you have no work for the man, send him away; don't abuse him to me;' this with her brown-gold head thrown back as defiantly as though she were an insulted empress, rather than a farmer's housekeeper.

Ralph eyes her approvingly. There is a dash of the bully in his nature, the merest *soupçon*, but still there it is, and he rather enjoys being flown at by this mite of a woman.

'Perhaps I shall take you at your word,' smiles he, settling the lining in his hat.

She is silent for a second, then she says with a melancholy little shake of her head, all her vigour gone:

'You must do as you like, sir.'

'Certainly; I fully intend to;' and he walks away out of the room.

Here is a pretty kettle of fish! Durran will be turned off be-

cause she has lost her temper. Let the manner of his discharge be what it may, he will accredit it to her unfriendly influence. Ah! there is no end to her worries, poor soul, no way out of them that she can see, as she sits this gloomy summer's night looking out upon the dripping trees, and beaten flowers, and shifting driving clouds, and wondering dully whether it would not be better for her never to have seen the inside of the White Farm, to go away somewhere else at once perhaps, to violently break through the meshes of this circumstance-woven web wherein she has got entangled, through no fault or will of hers.

Presently she goes into the kitchen to see if Jim has returned from the village, whither she had sent him on an errand.

He has, and is seated on the settle near the fireplace, smoking a long clay pipe with a jug of beer beside him. Eunice is busy lace-making. Mr. Durran is lounging against the back door-sill, his hands in his pockets, and his hat at the back of his head; he has evidently looked in to say 'good-night,' on his way to the village, where he lodges in the house of Eunice's mother.

'Don't much matter if it do,' growls Jim, taking a pull at his beer as Judith enters.

'Well, I never!' exclaims Eunice; 'that be nasty!'

'What is nasty?' asks Miss Scott, and Jim gets on to his feet, to search in his coat-pockets for the parcel he has brought her from the 'shop.'

'Why, Jim says it don't much matter if it rains on Monday, and just think 'ow folks would be disapinted; lor, there!' ejaculates Eunice, while her bead-headed bobbins fly right and left, briskly.

'I'm very sorry to say that Mr. Considine can't spare you on Monday, Jim,' observes Judith. 'I'm going to stay at home, and he won't believe that I can take care of the house alone. Thank you!' taking the parcel from his big horny hand.

Mr. Durran pricks up his ears, and looks out of the corner of his eye at Eunice.

'Very well, 'm,' says Jim stolidly, 'it don't signify neither way to me;' and he re-seats himself on the settle.

'Mrs. Dunn used always to stay at 'ome on race-days, and there wasn't never no 'arm comed to 'er!' remarks Eunice in an aggrieved tone of voice.

'Nor do I see what possible harm could come to me; but Mr. Considine seems to have made up his mind that you and Jim are to keep me company, so I suppose there's nothing more to be said.'

'What! me too!' exclaims the girl, reddening angrily. 'Well, to be sure!' and actual tears glitter in her blue eyes. She has bought a smart pink bonnet, and a mauve muslin, and a white alpaca jacket, and a green parasol, and a yellow pair of cotton gloves on purpose to dazzle the eyes of on this gala day of gala

days; and now she will not be able to exhibit any one of these sartorial marvels, as it ought to be exhibited, namely, in the society of other gorgeously-decorated females. Do pity her!

'Some people like to hinder others from enjoying themselves,' remarks Mr. Durran sententiously, dry-shaving his chin with his hand, and looking up at the ceiling.

'They does!' says Eunice viciously; 'but I won't stand it. I'll ask master myself to let me do as I've always done. Surely one 'oliday in the year over and above Easter and Whitsuntide ain't too much to 'ope for!'

'*I* should think not!' meaningly.

'I suppose Mr. Considine thought Tuesday was pretty much the same as Monday,' smiles Miss Scott with enviable phlegm.

'Tuesday ain't the same as Monday,' snaps Eunice, 'and master knows it. Jim don't care whether 'e goes or stops away,' glaring at him fiercely, an attention of which he appears profoundly unconscious; 'but I do—I likes a bit o' fun, and I means to 'ave it too!'

'Quite right,' approves Mr. Durran. 'Perhaps, 'm, you've heard whether there's any objection to my going to the races?' turning to Judith.

'Mr. Considine has said nothing about it to me.'

The man grins at her insolently.

'Not that I much care,' observes he, straightening himself up on his feet. Then he bids Eunice 'good-night,' and goes out.

'I think as maister's wise not to leave the place quite unpertected like,' remarks Jim, when the door has closed behind him.

'Well, then, you'd better stay and take care on it. No one with two eyes in their 'ead would want more than a look at you to fright 'em off,' retorts Eunice, chuckling over her own powers of sarcasm.

Judith thinks it prudent to withdraw herself at this juncture. These lovers, and they are lovers at bottom still, have been snapping and snarling at each other every day for a fortnight; possibly a good rousing quarrel may lead to a wholesale reconciliation, and put an end at once to their foolish bickerings, and Mr. Durran's nefarious schemes.

This last would not be the least desirable consequence of such an *ébranlement* in at least one person's opinion.

But let her wish as she may, no outward sign or token of her desires having attained fulfilment is visible either during the remainder of that evening or the major portion of Sunday. Eunice is certainly very subdued and gentle in her demeanour, but that may be due to her reverence for her sabbatical raiment, or even for the Lord's day itself. Jim is not apparent to the naked eye, or, indeed, any eye whatsoever, so there is nothing to be made out of him, and Judith is forced to base all her sanguine anticipations on one single

fact, namely, that no word, good, bad, or indifferent, has been spoken to Mr. Considine anent the races on the morrow.

Just before tea, however, the horizon clears.

She is sitting in her own room, as is her custom on a Sunday afternoon. It has been a showery sort of day, but now the sun is shining fiercely, as if enraged at the contradictory behaviour of the clouds, which will persist in getting in his way, and zigzagging across his path, despite his every effort to chase them fairly over to the other side of the world. When Eunice knocks at the door, Judith is sighing for sheer delight at the glory of the golden light flooding her little chamber, and her heart is prone to joy in the gladness of all glad creatures.

'Please, 'm,' says Eunice, looking very pink and bashful, 'would you and master mind my taking a bit of a walk after church to-night, if it's fine?'

'Who are you going with?' asks Judith, opening her sleepy eyes wonderingly.

'O, with Jim, 'm,' in a tone of deeply-injured innocence. To hear her one might swear she had never seen or heard of any other male human in her life.

Miss Scott smiles.

She was wise, then, to let them fight it out.

'You are sure it is with Jim?' questions she, searchingly however.

'O dear, yes, 'm,' responds Eunice promptly. 'We're all right again, now.'

'Well, I don't think there can be any objection to your taking a walk with him, if you're in by half-past eight;' very demurely.

'Perhaps you wouldn't mind askin' master, 'm? And please, 'm, I'd rather put off goin' to the races till Tuesday, when he can go too, for one day's as good as another, I daresay; and you see I've never been on a Tuesday, so it'll be a bit of a change like.'

A somewhat awkward pause; these sudden swerves and swoops are debilitating.

'I'm glad you're so sensibly inclined,' says Judith at length. 'It may rain to-morrow, after all, you know.'

'Yes, it may, 'm,' dubiously; twisting about the door-handle, which is a trifle infirm. 'But any ways I'm glad I got the better of my temper, which is like mother's, up in a minute and down again as soon if treated right; for master's a good master, and I'm sure I loves the very ground as 'e treads on, that I d-d-d-o!' and Eunice wipes her eyes with her stiffly-starched white apron, and sniffs vigorously.

Judith looks at her watch.

'Isn't it tea-time?' says she presently, when calm is restored.

'Thereabout, 'm,' is the meek rejoinder; 'leastways, the kettle

'll be a boilin' by now;' then suddenly, 'And you think I may go for a walk?'

'Yes.'

A fervent 'Thank you, 'm!' and away the girl goes down-stairs.

Does Judith wish she could idealise, could idolise some Jim of her own? Does she wish she had a Jim to walk with after church, to go to races with, to dream about, to make savoury meats for, to serve her whole life long?

Not she! Why, she is thirty! She is a staid experienced housekeeper! What has she to do with that dismallest of dismal delusions—'Love's young dream'?

Chapter VI.

FULL OF FEAR.

So race Monday comes at last,—comes in a cloud of gritty dust, with a nipping east wind for company, and a dull gray sky for background. Were it April instead of August it would be piercingly cold; even now the world looks bleak and unpleasurable, and Eunice, as she thinks over all that finery laid away in white pocket-handkerchiefs in her little chest of drawers up-stairs, cannot but congratulate herself on having at least the chance of wearing it under a brighter sky than this, and in an atmosphere a trifle less trying to the complexion of the human nose.

Judith is honestly sorry that it is not a fine day. Mr. Considine's enjoyment is of value in her eyes, and the veriest Mark Tapley, if sober, would find enjoyment beyond his powers in the present condition of outward things. Ralph himself cares very little about the pleasure of the matter; he is going not because he much cares to go, but because he has always gone ever since he was a straight, lithe, little lad of six years old. Is he not vilely *borné* and provincial, poor fellow? Perhaps, were he to declare his own most private inclinations, you might find that he would rather stay at home and see that no harm came to either quadruped or biped residing on the Farm, by reason of the strolling tinkers and vagrants now infesting the land; but let his feelings on this score be what they may, he dutifully keeps them to himself, and appears ready hatted and coated for a start, by half-past nine of the clock.

Judith thinks he is rarely good to see, as he stands there on the door-step beneath the voluminous cloud of old man's beard, drawing on a pair of new dogskin gloves.

'Let me get you a flower for your button-hole, sir,' says she, looking him up and down admiringly.

'Thanks!' eyeing the left side of his well-fitting frock-coat. 'I don't much care about that sort of thing.'

'Still it looks nice, especially on festive occasions;' and she

hurries out into a little greenhouse full of bright-hued flowering plants, plastered on to the side of the house near the parlour window. He follows her, and stands at the door while she snips here a bit of green, there a morsel of ruddy geranium, and lastly a creamy-lipped tea-rose scarce blown. Then, as she turns herself about to bind her spoils together, he says:

'I don't care a bit about going by myself. I made so sure you'd come with me.'

She stoops down to pick up a leaf which she has dropped.

'That is pretty, isn't it?' and she holds the tiny bouquet up for his inspection.

He looks at her instead, ever so gravely.

'Shall I pin it into your coat?'

No answer; he is now staring moodily at the leaf-strewn, pot-encumbered floor. She repeats her inquiry.

'Eh, what? O, I see! Thank you!' fumbling at his button-hole.

'Let me do it. They won't stay in without being pinned. You must stoop down, please.' She has to raise herself on tiptoe as it is.

'There!' says she, when the flowers are firmly fixed; 'isn't that an improvement?' and for a second, her hand rests on his breast; another, and it is clasped tightly in his own, so tightly that her fingers feel numbed and crushed, but only for a moment as it were; then he turns away, and walks back into the house.

A strange light flickers in his eyes as he bids her good-bye—the dogcart is standing at the hall-door—so strange indeed that she may scarce look up at him; but though she does not care to look him in the face, she looks after him long enough, looks after him as long as he may be seen, looks after him when he is fairly out of sight, looks after him as though he were the very goodliest thing that she is ever like to see.

The day creeps on apace. Jim comes in at twelve o'clock for a glass of ale; he is at work on the lawn, brushing up leaves, shearing grass borders, and generally pottering about weakly. Mr. Considine has given him orders to keep within hail of the womenkind to-day.

'Bitter wind, 'm,' says he to Judith, wiping his mouth with his sleeve, and setting down the glass on the dresser. 'I ain't a bit sorry as I ain't goin'.'

'Nor I,' says Eunice. 'Maybe it'll be a deal finer to-morrow. Is Durran gone?'

'I s'pose 'e is; leastways I ain't seen 'im this mornin'.'

Judith makes no remark anent this stray piece of information, and Jim shuffles off forthwith.

Nothing extra domestic occurs until about half-past four in the afternoon, when Judith, who is performing her after-dinner toilette, looks out of her lattice window, which commands a view of the drive, and sees, not without surprise, two men, one with a bright

scarlet handkerchief round his neck, and yellowish gaiters on his legs, both strange to Louch, as far as she can make out at that distance, walking down to the stables. Now she knows that a butcher and grazier with whom Mr. Considine occasionally does business has been expected to call for some days past with reference to the purchase and removal of a certain white calf, which is ready for killing, poor little beast! and the thought strikes her, as she stands there considering what she has seen, that very likely these men may be the butcher in question and his assistant. Her dress is not properly on, or she would hasten down-stairs at once to ascertain the exact state of the case, for her master's suspicions have somehow got into her head; directly she is in some degree presentable, however, away she runs to the kitchen, where Eunice is ironing aprons.

'Has any one knocked at the door?' asks she, fastening her band as she speaks.

'No, 'm, not as I've 'eerd,' is the prompt reply.

'How very odd! As I was dressing, I saw two men, something like butchers or horse-dealers, walk down the drive this way, and I thought they must be come to see the calf. I wonder where Jim is;' perturbedly. The idea of two great burly wretches in ambush on the premises is not pleasing to a lone female.

'Let's ring the bell,' suggests Eunice; and forthwith she runs up the crooked back stairs, and tugs away lustily at a stout rope attached to a bell swung on cross bars on the roof of the house, and principally used to summon the master to his meals when he is out and about on the farm.

Clang, clang, clang; they wait and listen nervously. Eunice has slipped the bolts of the back door into their sockets; she is as white as a sheet, and shaking all over.

'Don't be so frightened,' smiles Judith, trying hard to seem grand and indifferent. 'Here comes Jim. Now we shall hear the rights of it;' and she opens the door.

'What is it, mum?' says Jim, halting on the threshold. 'I 'eerd the bell, and so I runned back at once; but I very nigh caught 'em!' grinning eloquently.

'Caught whom?' asks Judith sharply.

'Why, two tramps, or soment o' that sort, as 'adn't no right to be a pokin' about among our ricks;' still grinning.

'Poking about among the ricks! What do you mean?'

'Why, I'll tell yer, mum. I'd been down in the long meadow a clearin' out some o' them nettles, as master tell'd me to, and I was jest comin' out o' the gate when I caught sight of a feller with leggins on and a red 'andkercher round 'is neck a dodgin' about in the rick-yard; and jest as I was about to holloa at un, out flies Jack, and barks like mad, an' with that up comes another chap, and then seein' of me, they takes to their 'eels down the road. I was a

goin' to go arter 'em, but you rung the bell, so I 'ad no choice but to turn back; and that's the way they've got off, I 'spect.'

Judith's eyes flit here and there, as is their wont when she is thinking very fast.

'We rang because I saw those same men come up the drive, and I didn't like their looks,' says she at length.

'H'm!' grunts Jim. 'Whatever could they 'ave been a doin' of?'

'I can't think, unless they were after the fowls.'

'It might have been that, or they might 'ave been layin' a bit o' p'isoned meat for the dog;' scratching his head.

Judith's eyes fix on his; that last supposition strikes her as not altogether unlikely.

'Only,' says she dubiously, 'I don't see how they, being strangers, should know there was a dog on the farm.'

'Lor, 'm, there's never a farm without a dog that I ever 'eerd on. Them sort 'o fellers knows that well enough. I'll jest step round, and see if I can find anything near 'is kennel.'

'We'll come too,' says Eunice, who has done nothing but stare and gasp, and say, 'O, dear, O!' ever since Jim began his tale of horror. 'I couldn't no more stay in this house alone nor I could go up that chimbley.'

Jim laughs, and they all three set out forthwith. When they reach the rick-yard, however, there is nothing to be discovered of an alimentary nature, either human or canine, not even a bit of paper. They search carefully all round Jack's kennel, he being held back by his chain by Jim meanwhile; they even open and examine his mouth, an operation of no small delicacy, but no traces of meat can they find; and Judith begins to hope that after all these suspicious-looking visitors of theirs may be only a couple of errant and innocent tramps, who thought to take a short cut through Mr. Considine's fields to their next destination.

'I don't think we'll let them have another try at you, old man, however,' smiles she, patting the dog's great yellow head. 'Suppose we keep him in the house, Jim, until his master gets home!'

'Very well, 'm,' replies Jim; 'maybe, too, you'll feel safer like with 'im nigh at hand.' So Jack is forthwith loosed from his kennel and led along by his chain up the road.

'They went this way, didn't they?' inquires Eunice, looking to right and left fearfully.

'Yes, they went this way sure enough.'

Here Judith, who has been continuing her search, her eyes bent on the ground, suddenly darts at a bit of brown stuff lying in the road.

'Hold him tight and keep his head up! I believe I've got it. Yes, and there's another piece, and there's another!'

'What, what!' cries Eunice. 'Do say, please, 'm; I feel so awful bad. O, dear!' and she clasps her hands over her heart.

'It's nothing to be frightened of. It's only cat's meat;' and Miss Scott holds up three tough leathery morsels of a substance not procurable in that ilk.

Jim gazes at it wonderstruck. Jack pricks up his ears and wags his tail delightedly. He fancies it is some extra dainty *bonne bouche* for his dogship's delectation. 'You see you were right,' continues Judith; 'they did mean to poison him, the wretches! and they'd have done it, too, if you hadn't disturbed them!'

'So I 'spects,' says Jim sagely; 'now I wonder 'oo's at the bottom of that?'

Judith gropes about on all sides, and up and down the road, but she can find nothing more.

'They've taken the rest away with them, or perhaps these bits are sufficiently doctored to be deadly,' observes she, skewering them on a sharp bit of wood for Mr. Considine's inspection. Then they walk back to the house, talking as they go of double bars and bolts, and bells on shutters, and sitting up all night, and shooting down robbers right and left, and the usual extremely uncomfortable and loup-garouish improbabilities which are prone to occur to the mind of man and woman indiscriminately in the like emergencies.

Chapter VII.

IN A MIST OF MISERIES.

Now, the excitement over, and quiet time for reflection afforded her, Judith begins to feel extremely uneasy concerning that unlucky speech of William Durran's on Saturday night, about poison curing Jack of his aggressive propensities. Twist it and turn it as she may, reduce it to the merest idle verbiage, divest it of all meaning, it still remains a distinctly unlucky speech, now that it has taken the shape and colour of actual fact. How will Mr. Considine regard it, if it should recur to his memory, as recur it most certainly will, sooner or later? How can he regard it, save as the indication of an intention on the part of Durran to commit this very act, which has just been committed? And then Judith knows that her master can be implacable, can be even cruel when he chooses, only he elects to consider what she calls cruelty, wholesome severity. He has never liked this man whom she has brought into the place, has only put up with him to oblige her; now his dislike will blaze up into vindictive animosity. Ah, she may well await Ralph's coming with an anxious heart. And in her own mind does she entirely acquit her strange acquaintance of all knowledge of the matter? Who shall say? She best knows. I will not pry into her painful thoughts—I feel too sorry for her, poor distracted creature!

Loud sounds Jack's bark through the house—he is chained up in the hall. What is he making such a noise about? Hark, the dog-cart wheels crunch the gravel; Mr. Considine is shouting 'Jim!' One hurried look in the tiny glass, one moment's delay—is it for prayer? is it for breath?—and then down she goes, calm and self-possessed as if she had no mind to be tortured, no heart to be broken, nothing but a dainty body to care for, and a round of easy daily tasks to do. When she reaches the hall-door, she finds that Jim is already deep in the mysteries of narrative.

'So you've been frightened out of your wits!' says Ralph, turning to her with a sorry attempt at a smile.

He looks tired and haggard.

'We have had a small excitement, that is all,' replies she, eyeing his faded little bouquet.

'I hope it mayn't be the forerunner of a greater one,' is the grave rejoinder. 'At all events, I should like to know exactly what did happen,' and pulling off his light-gray overcoat he follows her into the hall.

'There is hardly anything to tell,' she returns carelessly. 'I was startled by seeing two strange men walk down the drive as I was dressing, and I went down to see if they had called at the back door. I thought one of them was that butcher to whom you had promised the calf. When I found Eunice knew nothing about them, I rang the bell for Jim; he said he had just seen two men run away up the rick-yard frightened by Jack. I recognised his description of them. We went to see if we could find out what they had been doing, and we found these bits of meat,' going to the sideboard, and pointing to the extemporised skewer; 'and that is all.'

'All in your opinion, I daresay,' says he, smelling at the meat.

'Why, what more can you know?'

'Jack wouldn't have barked a welcome to me when I came home if he had eaten that,' throwing the meat back upon the sideboard.

'Is it rank poison, then?'

'Yes. Now, look here; you've got eyes in your head, and neither of those two fools in the kitchen have; tell me what one of those men was like;' and he sets her before him as he might a child.

Judith feels inclined to put her hands behind her back, she has plenty of the girl in her yet; but she thinks better of it, and answers him as gravely as a judge, or rather a witness under cross-examination.

'One man—I didn't take any notice of the other—wore yellow leggings, and a red handkerchief round his throat.'

Mr. Considine smiles. 'I thought so,' says he. 'Whom do you think I saw last in that fellow's company?'

She cannot speak, her tongue cleaves unto the roof of her mouth, she knows so well what is coming.

He watches her downcast face awhile, then he continues: 'Well, it was William Durran; he was with him on the racecourse.'

She sways to and fro like a stricken creature beneath his gaze.

'What's the matter?' cries he, catching her by the shoulder. 'What is that to you?'

'I was so frightened,' she stammers, 'and—and—'

He considers her, not without scorn.

'Yes,' pursues he, 'I've caught him out now; and by Heaven he shall know what I'm made of, or my name's not Ralph Considine!'

His passion is terrible. She shivers as though his breath were the keen east wind.

'You've deceived me about that man, somehow; don't try to speak,—you'll lie. I don't know how I've been deceived, but I have been deceived; and I'll punish him for it;' in a fierce low tone through clenched white teeth.

'Why not punish me?' quite bravely.

'Punish you!' with a savage tenderness, tenderer than the softest words.

She stands meek and white and weak before him. She knows her own heart then. There is silence between them for a while. When Mr. Considine speaks again, he is practical common sense itself.

'Tell Jim to ask Jenkins to sleep here to-night, and let us have supper at once,' says he.

She departs on other feet than hers, for she is far away—in Tartarus, in the moon, not in the White Farm, at all events.

Scarce a word is uttered by either of them at supper. Eunice wonders what has come to them both,—to her master, so stern, so silent; to Miss Scott, so pale, so self-constrained. After supper there is no walk, no talk, nothing but smoke and dreary work—fancy-work, that cruellest of work. At last Judith can bear it no longer; she rushes out into the garden, hatless, shawlless, anything is better—even the drizzling rain, which has just begun to fall—than that terrible lack of sound, that infinitude of stitches; she strays away down the quasi-shrubbery in which she once held converse with the man who has wrought her this bitter misery. She finds herself opposite the summer-house; she enters it and sits down on one of the rough wooden benches, and leans her head on her hands, and stares out vacantly at the gray-black masses of cloud banked up in the east. The night comes on, the raindrops patter down from leaf to leaf, the wind howls and rages round about her place of refuge; still she sits on, regardless of all save her own exceeding heaviness of soul. Suddenly light woman's steps come pit-pat down the walk. It is Eunice with an umbrella. She has her bonnet on, she seems to have been into the village—gossiping of course.

'Master sent me to look for you, 'm, and to say as if you'd no ob-

jection, would you mind comin' in, as 'e wants to 'ave the 'ouse locked up early to-night?' This she says standing at the summer-house door.

'Very well;' ever so wearily. 'Where have you been to?'

'I've been to mother's, 'm. And, what do you think? that there Bill Durran ain't 'ome from the races yet!'

Miss Scott makes no remark. She feels as though a thunderbolt might be on its way to destroy her, and she would not stir an inch to get out of its path.

'Jenkins be come, and 'e 'ave got 'is gun with un, and so 'ave Jim 'is!' says Eunice, but the words sound like letters, they have no sense nor meaning.

A few seconds more and they are inside the house. Mr. Considine receives them. His face is cold and hard.

'You can go to your rooms at once,' says he. 'You will only be in the way down-stairs.'

'Good-night, sir,' reply they meekly; and forthwith retreat into the kitchen, there to light their candles, and betake themselves by the back staircase to their own apartments; one of them to sleep despite her terror, one of them to stay awake despite her courage.

Chapter VIII.

AT LAST.

By ten o'clock the rain and rain-clouds are alike no more, and the three-quarter moon shines whitely from a star-bejewelled firmament upon the still drenched earth. Judith opens her window ever so noiselessly, blows out her candle, and sits down upon the window-seat to gaze her full upon the loveliness of the placid night. There is a balmy odour of damp mould, of dewy leaves, and slumberous flowers abroad; there is a heavenly calm about the scene. O, that she were dead, and this were Paradise! The big tears gather in her dull gray eyes as she thinks that thought, for she is indeed weary of her sick life.

Without being told, she knows, somehow, that Ralph is keeping watch below, and the knowledge holds her wakeful. She hears Jim and Jenkins shutting shutters which are not shut in general, and which creak rustily on their hinges; she hears doors locked, now here, now there,—she hears the scroop of huge nailed boots on the kitchen floor,—then she hears the dining-room door close determinately, and she says to herself, 'The night has begun—the night has begun!'

How long she sits at her open window with a great red shawl drawn closely round her, she can scarce tell, for she has forgotten to wind-up her watch; the kitchen clock strikes anything, just according to its own wayward fancy, and the church clock happens to be under repair. The weird white owls resident in an ivied beech-tree

by the stables, struck by lightning long, long ago, when Ralph's grandfather was a youngster in blue jacket with gilt buttons, voluminous ruffles and nankeen breeches, sail to and fro among the trees, hooting dismally every now and then; the moon sinks lower in the sky, the milky way floats tremulous before her tired eyes, she has much ado to keep them open at all, indeed; her head sinks back against the wall, her hands fall powerless on her lap, she is—Hist! a rustle amidst the shrubs. She struggles hard to conquer sleep—a muffled tread, a whisper. Yes, a whisper! Ah! she is wide awake enough now; noiselessly as a shadow she draws herself back into the room. Her window is so embowered in creeping roses and honeysuckles that at night it is scarcely visible from the ground. They will not notice that it is open. Listening breathlessly she hears these stealthy trespassers creep, creep away, round the house; the parlour window is the object of their search, she feels assured; it lies near to the ground; a man might easily step in at it if once the shutters were unclosed—and Ralph is its sole guardian. Ralph's very life is in danger! He may be asleep, he may be inefficiently armed. Quick as thought she is out upon the landing, light as a breath she hurries down the stairs, across the hall; Jack growls at her in his sleep. Her hand is on the door, there is a sound within of parting bolts, of falling glass; a movement, a step forward, and the detonating crack of a revolver.

One second, and Judith bursts into the room. What does she see? Ralph Considine, the discharged firearm in his hand, his face eager to ferocity, bending forward to look at a heap of something lying crumpled up on the flower-bed beneath the window, out of which protrude two bony hands clutching the window sill, with the desperate energy of direful agony.

'Who is it? What is it?' exclaims she, rushing forward, her red shawl trailing at her heels.

'A scoundrel who has got his deserts!' answers Ralph grimly. 'Go and tell Jim and Jenkins to come here and help to lift the beast in.'

She stares at him with horror-dilated eyes.

'But who is it?' she reiterates. 'Poor wretch! Hark, how he groans!' and she steps fearfully forward. At her voice, the would-be burglar, with one convulsive effort, which dyes all his right sleeve crimson, contrives to raise his tortured face.

'Will!' she cries, 'Will!' and her voice is shrill with pain.

Back he falls, his hands unloose their slippery hold; there are five bloody finger marks where the right has been.

Ralph looks at her in silence.

She looks at him, defiantly, reproachfully.

'Go and call the men,' says he at length; and she goes without a word.

By this time all the household is astir, and every one is brimful of valour and big words; there is no need for Miss Scott to tell what she has seen; shot burglars are as plentiful as apricots.

'I never thought as that there chap were up to much good!' remarks Jim sourly, when poor miserable William Durran is at length hoisted, limp, bleeding, groaning, and insensible, on to the couch in the parlour, as pitiable a specimen of sinning, misguided, ruined humanity as can be well conceived.

Judith is hovering meanwhile about the door, Eunice at her elbow. She can neither go away up-stairs, nor bring herself to enter the room wherein he lies.

'I'm glad we caught 'im!' goes on Jim; Judith can see him grinning in her mind. 'What do'ee mean to do to 'im, maister?'

'Have him tried at the sessions,' responds Ralph promptly. 'Now, Jenkins, start off at once for the doctor, and bring him back with you if you can. Where's Miss Scott?' coming to the door.

'I am here!' she answers, holding tight on to the banisters; she is sick and giddy.

'Come and see what you can do for this fellow. You ought to, you know, as you brought him here!' Mr. Considine's tone and the mocking devilry of his eyes are not pleasant to hear or see.

She gathers herself together as it were by dint of sheer force, and follows him into the room, glancing tearfully at the pallid blood-bedaubed creature lying upon the horsehair sofa. Jim and Jenkins shuffle out.

Mr. Considine shuts the door, and takes a bottle of brandy from the sideboard cupboard.

'Don't give him any while I'm here!' says Judith quickly; cutting up a piece of old linen, which she has found in her work-basket, into wide bandages as well as she can with her shaking hands.

'Why?' asks her master sharply.

'I couldn't bear him to speak to me!'

'Judith!' exclaims he, catching hold of her arm as she passes him, 'what is that man to you? I will know. You shall tell me now, at once!' with a subdued vehemence not to be gainsaid.

She looks to right and left like a hunted thing.

'He is your lover, your husband?'

She starts as though he had struck her. A vivid flush incarnadines her face from brow to chin.

'He is your husband?' he repeats, giving her a little shake.

'He is my brother! I was so fond of him; I never thought he was really wicked.'

'Your brother!' and a pause. 'Judith, you are telling me the truth—as you live, you are telling me the truth?' and his dark keen face grows fiercely earnest.

'I am telling you the truth!' says she, quite simply.

He lets go her arm, and turns away to the open window. Small need have they of speech!

Chapter IX.

HE CLOTHED HER WHITE AND RED.

Ten o'clock on Tuesday morning. The doctor has been and gone. William Scott will live. His wound is only painful, not dangerous. 'There is no reason why he should not see Melbourne yet,' avers Sir Medicus. So Mr. Considine tells Judith after that worthy gentleman's departure; tells her in a would-be careless way as she searches in the stone parlour-cupboard for some farinaceous substance whereof the prisoner is ordered to partake in an hour's time.

'I am sorry he will get well,' says she quietly, measuring out a teacupful of small white grain.

'You needn't be.'

She looks up questioningly.

'I don't mean to prosecute him,' observes Ralph, swinging a hunting-crop he has in his hand to and fro by the lash.

She is silent awhile. Was there ever such a monster of ingratitude? Then she says hardly, 'There is no reason that I can see why you should not punish him for trying to rob you.'

'He is your brother.'

'Yes; but—'

'Judith, don't you know that I love you?'

Does she know it, I wonder, that the glad blood rushes up so joyously to her pale cheeks and broad low brow?

He lays his hand upon her shoulder; it is shaking, shaking with a strong man's passion. He has held her sacred. Yes; even in his thoughts until this overwhelming hour; but now he knows her as she is—the only woman he has ever cared for, the only woman who shall ever be his wife.

'Judith,' says he so softly that she scarce knows his voice, and yet she thinks she knows it pretty well, 'look up at me,'—and she does look up at him shyly, with sweetest eyes—'my darling!' and he clasps her in his arms, and holds her tight. A great pain arises in her heart, a strange delicious pain such as it were well to die of, she fancies, if only grace were given one.

'Don't kiss me, dear,' whispers she; 'I will call you dear just *once!* I am not good enough for you to kiss.'

But he kisses her again. He is Her Master still.

'LOVE-PHILTERS'

THE 'old story' has been handed down unchanged; but the language in which it is uttered has undergone many modifications, adapting itself to the varying phases of social usage and the constraining influence of fashion. Thus, in the days of chivalry, the enamoured knight borrowed the phraseology of the tournament when he would apostrophise his mistress, and deemed no enterprise too perilous which could win her favour. The Crusader believed that 'there is no love-broker in the world can more prevail in man's commendation with woman than the report of valour.' And nation stood in arms against nation 'for the honour of the ladies.' While the Troubadour, applauding the spirit of those days, sang:

> 'Les chevaliers mieux en valoient,
> Les dames meilleures étoient,
> Et plus chastement en vivoient.'

When religious asceticism was the rule, the love-sick swain wore the weeds of penitence; and when it was the mode for pilgrims to travel through the land, he set forth, staff in hand, to seek some knight well-read in the heart's lore, whose mature wisdom might suggest some advice to meet his case. But among all the methods by which it was deemed that the coy god might be won or retained, perhaps the most curious was the employment of love-philters, by which it was believed that the most obdurate heart could be softened.

The philter (the φίλτρον of the Greeks) was, as its name implies, a love-potion; and since 'all is fair in love and war,' it was looked on as a recognised weapon, not only to be used but also to be guarded against. Hence arose the custom of applying ἀλεξιφάρμακα (counter-charms), which, when employed with the cabalistic songs prescribed for the occasion, were sure of success, unless a more powerful one of the order should counteract the spells of the officiating witch. The ingredients mingled in a love-potion were such, that it may well have tasked all the gallantry of a reluctant lover to accept the proffered cup. Some of the components most in favour were the bones of toads and snakes, a portion of the forehead of a new-born foal, called 'hippomanes,' the feathers of a night-hawk, the blood of doves, bones torn from the mouth of famishing dogs, and the strands of the rope with which a man had hanged himself.* Among such a heterogeneous collection of materials some must have had injurious properties. And, either in gratifica-

* Horace, *In Canidiam.*

tion of private hate, or to make good their reputation from time to time among their votaries, it was in the power of the dealers in magic to prepare a decoction which should arrest the reason or even the flow of life; such as the witch of Vesuvius prepared for Glaucus.

So great was the encouragement given to this nefarious traffic, that it produced a regular profession, well skilled to cull the spotted henbane and dig the hemlock's root. From her evil preëminence, Locusta, the poisoner of Britannicus, gave her name to the trade, and taught the matrons of Rome how to distil the toad and poisonous mushroom in their husbands' cup, so that the disordered brain might wander.*

Among the Greeks, the Thessalians held the first place as magicians; and it was believed that they had power even to draw down the moon by their incantations. In Italy, the Marsians, who derived their power from the son of Circe, were deemed the most potent, and many instances are related of their skill.

We must not stray into the field of ordinary poisoning, which was so fashionable among the patrician ladies of Rome as to call for special legislation in the Lex Cornelia against all who sold, bought, or prepared noxious drugs, but confine ourselves to what may be called love-philters, *i.e.* potions administered, or incantations performed, for the purpose of exciting or retaining love; and under this category, it will be seen that luckless husbands, whose affections were supposed to be straying, were not exempt from danger. It is upon this that the tragic story of Dejanira is founded, who, becoming jealous of Iole, sent to her husband, Hercules, the robe steeped in the blood of Nessus, which the crafty centaur gave her, bidding her take this profit of his last passage across the river over which he was bearing her, that it might prove to her a soothing charm over the mind of Hercules, so that when he looked on any other woman he might not feel more affection for her than for his lawful wife.

Horace describes the method by which witches prepared a love-charm by burying the body of a child in the ground. The head being left exposed, food, changed three times in the day, was placed before the famishing victim; then, when life had become slowly extinct, the parched liver was removed and carefully guarded as a charm of peculiar potency. Theocritus supplies us with a recipe so accurately described that it may be worth recounting. The slighted maiden, complaining that her lover had deserted her, prepares 'a poisonous brewage,' with which she bids her attendant smear the threshold of his door. Having wreathed a bowl with fine purple wool, she whirls the wheel, casting meantime a handful of barley-meal upon the fire, that so the faithless lover's bones may waste away; whirling the wheel again, she burns a sprig of laurel, that,

* Juvenal, *Satires*.

as the crackling leaves consume, so his flesh may burn; then she moves the wheel once more, she melts wax upon the flames, that her stubborn lover may, in like manner, melt. How great is the faith she places in these arts we gather from her love-sick ravings. 'Whom sought I not?' she exclaims. 'What magic-dealing crone consulted not?' And again:

> 'That chest has drugs shall make him feel my rage;
> The art I learn'd from an Assyrian sage.'

In addition to these methods for awakening a reciprocal passion, images of wax were formed, under the belief that whatever impress the plastic material received would be communicated to the person whose form it bore. And when it was desired to soften one heart and render the other obdurate, clay and wax were exposed at the same time.

In these days, when so many are engaged in sweeping clean the cobwebs which time and fancy have hung on many a cherished theory, it seems strange to reflect that the belief in this black art should have been handed down through so many generations. The slighted swain was accustomed to resort to the 'wise woman' to learn what medicine would induce his 'light-heel'd mistress' to look kindly on his suit. And the forlorn maiden, who had cast her affections on some supercilious Adonis, repaired, with beating heart and strange sense of guilt, to the magician's cave, to obtain the mystic draught. Then, trembling, but urged on by the prize to be won, or, what was perchance of more importance in her eyes, to be torn from her rival, she would present the cup to her lover, as Nydia administered the draught to Glaucus.

If any there be who suffer from unrequited love, and are deprived of these means of obtaining it, let them take comfort from the words of the great instructor, who, denouncing as criminal the use of these philters 'which cause paleness,' bids his disciples bear in mind that there is no virtue in the herbs of Medea, nor in Marsian [illegible] with magic notes, to make the flickering flame of love [illegible]. Dash down the poison-cup which would substitute the [illegible] of madness for the flames of Venus. Would you avoid [illegible], and bask still in the sunlight of your mistress's [illegible] yourself worthy to be loved, and trust not alone in [illegible] how the ill-favoured Ulysses, with his fluent [illegible] Calypso's heart; and how she bid him tell [illegible] the story of his woes, and trace with mimic [illegible] upon the sand of the sea, which she implored [illegible] trial of.

[illegible] beauty is fleeting. The violets and lilies [illegible] when the pink rose has fallen, there re- [illegible] which bore it.

HENRY SNEYD.

THROUGH FIRE AND WATER

A Tale of City Life

BY FREDERICK TALBOT

AUTHOR OF 'THE WINNING HAZARD,' 'JACK PUGH'S LEGACY,' ETC.

CHAPTER XXIII.

'Sorrow breaks seasons and reposing hours,
Makes the night morning and the noontide night.'

PATTY ROBINSON had not been mistaken. It was in truth Lucy who had gone out so early that morning, and her destination was Fenton's Hotel, where Sir Pantlin and the archdeacon were staying. The place had been wrapped in deep slumber when she reached it; the earliest chambermaid had not begun to stir, Boots was immersed in sleep, the night porter had gone home to bed, and as yet none of the myrmidons of day had made their appearance. Lucy was perplexed and terrified at this obstacle. How could she wake this sleeping house, and rouse their dull unsympathetic souls to hear her story?

As she stood with her hand on the bell that was marked 'Night bell,' half-frightened and half-resolved, the door opened, and a tall man in black came out. With vacant dreamy eyes and head bowed down between his shoulders, he passed by Lucy without taking any notice of her, and walked slowly away. It was the archdeacon, John's father, going out for his accustomed morning walk, that all this toil and trouble hadn't put him off from. Lucy ran after him and stopped him. When he recognised her, a puzzled pained expression came across his face.

'I have something to tell you,' began Lucy, 'that you must hear. I don't know whether I am right or wrong, but I can do no other—I must speak. Your son came to our place that night, and he never left it. And Edward knows where he is, and he is gone—run away!'

'Who, John?' cried the archdeacon, his face brightening up. 'Is that really so—is the boy safe?'

Lucy shook her head.

'No, I don't mean that. Edward has run away—that looks like guilt. O, what shall I do?'

'My dear child,' said the archdeacon, coming to a full stop in the middle of the road, 'this is very sad. Do you mean to say that you suspect your brother—your own brother?'

as the crackling leaves consume, so his flesh may [illegible] knowing that moves the wheel once more, she melts wax upo[illegible] [illegible]on, his sister! her stubborn lover may, in like manner, melt. [illegible] faith she places in these arts we gather from h[illegible] God knows 'Whom sought I not?' she exclaims. 'Wha[illegible] [illegible] it the very consulted not?' And again:

> 'That chest has drugs shall make him [illegible]
> The art I learn'd from an Assyrian [illegible]

[illegible] John than I; [illegible]body, brother

In addition to these methods for awak[illegible] [illegible]ed: 'Fas est ab images of wax were formed, under the [illegible] [illegible]—well, I will leave the plastic material received would be [illegible] Come to the hotel with whose form it bore. And when it wa[illegible] and render the other obdurate, clay [illegible] As they reached the steps same time.

In these days, when so many [illegible] [illegible]g swiftly along towards cobwebs which time and fancy [illegible] a certain amount of discon- theory, it seems strange to refl[illegible] [illegible] who it was with the arch- should have been handed down [illegible] [illegible]d to see you looking so well, slighted swain was accustom[illegible] [illegible] was off betimes this morn- learn what medicine would [illegible] [illegible] spoken to 'em. But see- kindly on his suit. And the[illegible] [illegible]haps you'll tell me where a tions on some supercilio[illegible] [illegible] strange sense of guilt, [illegible] [illegible]y to the archdeacon. draught. Then, trembli[illegible] 'Yes, indeed, I think so.' or, what was perchance [illegible] [illegible]d Lucy slowly, 'on his way from her rival, she w[illegible] [illegible] John, because I have seen the administered the dr[illegible] [illegible] too that was his; but I will

If any there be [illegible] [illegible] for me to speak.' of these means of [illegible] [illegible] looking at her in a quiet re- of the great fa[illegible] [illegible] doing the noble Roman. There those philters [illegible] [illegible] half minute, miss, if you please.' mind that there [illegible] [illegible] and adroitly made himself master spells mingled [illegible] [illegible] to her lover's disappearance. burn steady. [illegible] [illegible] in a dream. What had she raging fro[illegible] [illegible] the dreary [illegible] [illegible] her, the man had told her. Was favour, 'm[illegible] [illegible] wicked and miserable as she? beauty.' [illegible] [illegible]ing at home seemed quiet and speech, [illegible] [illegible] about household matters. The her [illegible] [illegible] loaded and unloaded. There art the [illegible] [illegible] that was working in their lives. him [illegible] [illegible] at last. Nothing whatever [illegible] [illegible] of fugitives or police, of John's blood [illegible] [illegible] walked to and fro in front of the mai[illegible] [illegible] footstep had been beating into [illegible] [illegible] all day. But there was nothing else different at Ebbs-

wonderful quietude and stillness. As night came she would go and visit the old warehouse. But It was nowhere to be found. In her heart not get into the place. The thought room struck her with horror, and yet and visit it. It was well that she had

clock Lucy went to her own room to bed. little respite in sleep from the troubles that She did not undress, however, but, slipping off her her shoulders a loose wrapper and laid down on she could not sleep. To close her eyes seemed to be all kinds of uncanny dismal thoughts to run riot in her The stillness and quietude and darkness soothed her, however, into a sort of lethargy. She was aroused ere long by a curious muffled sound that seemed to proceed from the bowels of the earth. What it was she could not for a long time make out. At last it resolved itself into this—the baying and howling of a dog.

Chapter XXIV.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

The Reverend John Jones, left once more to silence and solitude, began to feel languor and somnolence creeping over him, with a sense of hopelessness and indifference to whatever might betide. His head ached, his brow burned, his throat was parched; he was altogether ill and miserable. True that his situation was not so deplorable as it had been before his enemy had visited him. He had no longer any fear of personal violence. He was well provided with food and drink. He had a palliasse and some blankets to repose upon. The vault in which he was confined was dry and cool. Young Hulse, with strange thoughtfulness, had even brought him a newspaper to read as well as a supply of candles. It was in John's nature to take an easy hopeful view of matters and accommodate himself to circumstances, and this disposition reasserted itself after the first moment of depression. He adjusted his candle carefully, laid himself down on his mattress with a bumper of sherry-and-water by his side, and composed himself comfortably to read himself to sleep.

The newspaper contained an account of his own mysterious disappearance. That amused and interested him. He felt rather flattered that he was the subject of such interest and speculation. But he was very weary and tired, and presently fell fast asleep. When he awoke he felt rested and refreshed. His head was better, and he was altogether stronger and more capable. He had no means of telling the time or reckoning the hours of his captivity,

but it was not so completely dark as it had been. There was some communication with the outward air, probably through the vaulted roof, and a faint glimmer of daylight somehow filtered through.

With renewed strength, however, came a strong desire for liberty and impatience of his captivity—a longing for his own comfortable room, his bath and toilet requisites—a feeling of dirt and grousiness.

To dissipate these thoughts, the curate of St. Saveall's took up the candle and began to explore his cavern. It was not without some antiquarian interest. Round pilasters with rudely sculptured capitals supported ribs of stone that formed a plain barrel vaulting overhead. It had been a chapel once upon a time, perhaps. There were even traces, he thought, of an altar-stone at the farther end of the crypt, which had been broken away; the remains of a rude piscina, a hollow basin for the rinsings of the sacred vessels, was on the right-hand wall. Perhaps there might be an aumry or cupboard for the reception of the altar-plate on the other side? At first sight it seemed as though there were nothing of the kind, but, looking closely, John perceived that there was a slight depression in the wall where such a thing was likely to be found, and tapping this with his fingers it gave back a ringing sound. There was an iron plate here evidently and some receptacle behind, but he could see no means of opening it. There was no knob or depression of which he could take advantage; the plate of iron was firm, and almost flush with the wall. As he stooped down with the candle in his hand to examine the lower courses of the masonry, he struck his foot against something that jingled, and behold it was a bunch of keys, rusted all over, modern keys of a common pattern, all but one, which was long with a narrow barrel and curiously-shaped wards.

Was there any keyhole to this iron plate? There was none apparent, but careful research revealed one that closed with a spring. The long key evidently had once fitted this hole, but now it was rusted so much that it could not be inserted. John took up some gravel from the floor and polished the key carefully; with a pin he cleared the barrel from accumulated dust. After a while he succeeded in getting the key into the lock. With an effort he opened the lock, and the door swung forwards. This secret repository was in truth a neat little iron safe that had been fitted in the recess; a safe with drawers and another small locked iron door within it.

John eagerly opened the drawers. They were all empty. Then he found on the bunch of keys the one that fitted the little door, and he opened it. There was a bundle of papers within and an old battered volume in a limp leathern cover. Altogether this was interesting, and John, after satisfying himself that there was nothing

else contained in the safe, took back his prize to his couch and proceeded to examine it.

The papers seemed to be a list of securities, of which he could make nothing. The old leather-covered volume contained nothing of interest. It seemed to be a sort of day-book, or the rough record of transactions of a financial sort. There were jottings here and there that might have thrown some light upon the identity of the former owner; but all doubt as to this was removed by the title-page, which bore the inscription, 'Gilbert Paston, his book,' and the rude doggrel, 'Gilbert is my name, England is my nation, New Romney is my dwelling-place, And Christ is my salvation!' It had been an old school ciphering-book, no doubt, which its penurious owner had subsequently utilised for business transactions. It had nothing in it to excite the attention of its reader, who was about to throw the book carelessly on one side when he espied a folded paper inserted between the last page and the binding.

The handwriting was crabbed and indistinct, tremulous as though the writer had been half-palsied when he wrote it. Jones, however, had little trouble in deciphering it.

'I have been troubled of late,' so ran the manuscript, 'with the thought that I have done some injustice to the Hulse family. When I was a struggling young man Fleetwood Hulse lent me five hundred pounds, which saved my credit and set me firmly on my legs. It was a foolish thing of him to do, for I had no security to offer him; and had matters taken a different turn he would never have been repaid. I did repay him, and with good interest, so I can charge my conscience with nothing owing to him. I should be sorry to trust any money of mine in the hands of such a foolish proud fellow, who has no notion of the proper use of money. I have been led to think about this from the fact that Fleetwood has this day asked me to advance him a similar sum to that he lent me. I could not do it; my principles would not allow me. I could never meet my Maker with a clear conscience if I made so foolish a use of the talents with which He has intrusted me. Yet I felt a certain remorse and sorrow that I was obliged to refuse him; and it has struck me that I can, without detriment to the useful objects to which I have devoted my poor savings, do something for the children of my wrong-headed unfortunate friend. Finding that his two children, Lucy and Edward, have been well brought up, and are likely to make a good use of anything they may acquire, I have resolved to frame a codicil to my will. As life is uncertain—and I have had sundry warnings that in my case it is especially so—I shall give effect to my intentions on the opposite side of this sheet, and when I return home I shall instruct my lawyer to prepare a properly drawn instrument.

(Signed) 'GILBERT PASTON.'

On the opposite side of the sheet was hastily scrawled:

'*Ebbsfleet, 28th June* 18—. I hereby revoke such part of the bequests contained in my will of the 9th October as relates to the sum of forty-two thousand nine hundred and thirty-five pounds eight shillings and elevenpence, Consolidated Three-per-cent Annuities; and I give and bequeath the same in equal moieties to Edward and Lucy Hulse, their heirs and assigns. GILBERT PASTON.

'*Witnesses:* JOB STIMSON, LUKE PLUMMER.'

John Jones rubbed his eyes in astonishment. There was an air of genuineness about this document that at once carried conviction to his mind. This will, or codicil, was dated just before Paston's death,—of the circumstances of which, and of their disappointment at not being remembered in the will, the Hulses had often talked in his presence. The wealth of old Paston was notorious; and were this codicil produced, there would be no difficulty in at once obtaining the bequest, for the estate had been so large and scattered, that the affairs were not even yet wound up. Probably these papers, too, would reveal unsuspected investments and unthought-of deposits, and would assist greatly in the realisation of the estate.

What a wonderfully different light this old scrap of paper threw upon matters! Why, here was he, John Jones, actually flinging away a charming girl and a living much better than that of Pumptrisaint, inasmuch as the income was larger and the duties far more agreeable,—flinging it away, without knowing what he was doing! How that stupid affair of the bill for three hundred pounds faded into insignificance now! No doubt he *had* given old Hulse to understand that he might use his name for some such trifling amount. He mustn't do it again though. It was high time that Lucy had some responsible disinterested guardian for her wealth.

In the mean time, how fortunate it was that he had said nothing to Lucy as to his proposed desertion of her! What he had spoken to Edward was in the heat of passion, and went for nothing. How fortunate, too, that he hadn't delivered that letter, which he had written with the intention of leaving at the house in case he should find his courage not high enough to break off with her in person! It was still in his pocket, no doubt. No, he couldn't find it there; he might have left it at his lodgings: he was so agitated that night that he might very well have forgotten to put it in his pocket.

Now everything would go as merrily as marriage bells. He would treat the whole matter connected with his disappearance as a foolish freak concocted between himself and Ned Hulse. Naturally Edward would be glad enough that this view should be taken; it would be a nine-days' wonder, that was all. Lucy would remain, at the end of it—Lucy charming, faithful—the mistress of twenty thousand pounds. Likely enough Sir Pantlin would still object;

but he didn't care a fig for Sir Pantlin now, or for Pumptrisaint either. Why should he bury himself among a lot of Welsh hovels for a paltry four hundred a year?

O, if he could only make Ned hear, and tell him it was all right, —that he had come to his senses, and would forgive and forget everything that had passed. The will could be discovered accidentally later on.

He cried out, in his jolliest, airiest tones, 'Ned, Ned!' but the walls returned him only the ring of his own voice. Then he essayed to pass into the outer crypt, but the door was fastened. He rattled and kicked at the door; a low growl, like a lion's smothered roar, was the response. He remembered that the old blind dog was also his guardian. Well, he must have patience; somebody would come by and by to release him.

He dozed and slumbered away the day, and still no one came. A certain chill and deadness of the air told him that it was now night. Another night to pass within this sepulchre; it was horrible to think of. Cut off from all the living world, immured in this dungeon, his whereabouts known only to two persons determined to keep him concealed. Had they deserted him, and made their escape without revealing the secret of his imprisonment? If so, he was buried alive. He would die here a lingering death—a death of slow starvation. And yet, as he thought of it, there could be no such imminent danger. Even if it were impossible for him to make himself heard, the dog in the adjoining chamber would not submit quietly to starvation; it would soon begin to bark and howl, and would draw attention to their hiding-place.

Even now he heard a prolonged howl from the dog outside. It was a melancholy dismal sound, and sent a thrill of nervous fear through the curate's frame. That was not the only sound that broke upon the stillness of the night. A dull confused roar, as of surf breaking upon a shore, or the wind among the branches of a pine-forest—a noise that waxed and waned in gusts, but that seemed to gather strength and volume each moment. The air, too, grew hot and mephitic; nay, from the crevices of the door puffs of thin vapour penetrated into the crypt. Louder and louder rose the howl of the dog, in dismal foreboding complaint.

For a moment John dashed furiously round his cell, striking his head against the walls, tearing at the cruel indifferent stones with his fingers. The warehouse was on fire, and he was doomed to the most horrible of deaths. Then, as he realised the utter hopelessness of any exertion on his part, he sank on his mattress in a state of semi-stupor. He was doomed to die. With all the possibilities of future happiness and joy within his very grasp, he was devoted to a torturing death by fire.

The heat grew fiercer, the eddies of smoke more thick and

choking. The dog was now furiously barking, driven half mad by the smoke and heat. Surely the end was very near at hand.

Chapter XXV.

CAPTIVITY.

Now that he had effected his *coup* and secured his prisoner, Mr. Brass did not feel called upon to hurry himself. He liked to improve his mind whenever occasion offered, and to extend his knowledge of men and things. Intrusting his prisoner, therefore, and the precious wooden box with the tin lining, to the care of the young man who accompanied him—a member of the force, who was gaining experience in his business under the tutelage of the accomplished Brass—he devoted his morning to an examination of the quays and docks of Southampton, and an investigation of the passenger arrangements of the several great steam-packet companies that have their headquarters at that port. These he scrutinised with the warm intelligent interest that a cat of poaching propensities might feel with regard to a well-used rabbit-run.

To Edward Hulse this delay was the one thing that redeemed him from utter despair. His father was speeding fast out of danger, and every hour gave ampler hope of ultimate escape. Now that the worst had come, he felt almost indifferent to the perils of his own position. He had only to speak, he had only to reveal the hiding-place of his supposed victim, and the charge against him must come to an end: as for any ulterior proceedings, he didn't much fear them. He was nevertheless resolved to say nothing whatever till twenty-four hours had elapsed from the sailing of the steamer. The moment that John Jones was released the matter of the forgery would come out, and measures might be taken to secure the culprit. As the curate's friends were influential and wealthy, extraordinary measures might be taken to stop his flight. A steamer might be dispatched to overtake the other, or an experienced detective sent to track him out in America.

When his thoughts wandered from his father's affairs to his own, he was overcome with a bitter sense of degradation and defeat. That Bilfil had succeeded in some villanous way in enticing Patty on board the steamer, Edward had no doubt; he couldn't disbelieve the evidence of his own senses; he could have sworn to that shawl anywhere. Not that he could at first believe that Patty was altogether faithless—that she had gone straight from his arms to the protection of Mr. Bilfil; but there was a horrible doubt in his mind. There were women capable of such profound baseness; why not this one? Had she not possibly even betrayed him to the police? How else should they have traced him so quickly and successfully?

Then, again, if Patty were really away by the American steamer,

innocent or guilty, her reputation was hopelessly gone. How could he ever make a woman his wife about whom such a story could be told, and could not be denied?

To complicate and complete his trouble came also this reflection: Patty gone—no matter how or why—the only person who knew of John's place of concealment was removed. She had the keys of the warehouse—the key too of the inner crypt. Suppose that when he came to tell his tale nobody would believe him, and that John were left there to starve? Weakened as he was, he might even succumb to the miseries of his imprisonment before the twenty-four hours had elapsed, and then indeed his enemy's blood would be upon his head.

Be that as it might, he was firmly resolved to say nothing till the morning, but still to preserve a discreet determined silence. Morning might bring some solution of his perplexities, he knew not how or whence.

It was quite dark before Mr. Brass and his prisoner reached Waterloo on their return journey. As Hulse had been arrested on a Secretary of State's warrant, his destination was Newgate; and for a moment the prisoner's heart sank as he realised what it was to be immured within that sombre prison, darkened by the memories of so much crime and misery. The cab in which they were conveyed took its way among gloomy silent back streets of Southwark, and so over Blackfriars-bridge. As they crossed the river, the cab all of a sudden came to a stand as there burst upon them a sight at once grand and appalling. A great sheet of flame was springing upwards to the sky, the river was aglow with fire, every ripple like a wave of molten brass. Spires, tall warehouses, boats, masts, and tangled rigging, white faces of men all turned one way sprang out into sudden distinctness. Everything seemed to stand still for a moment and to be silent in the face of this torrent of flame, and then to burst forth again into mad energy and uproar.

'Be quiet, can't you!' cried Brass to his companion, who instinctively struggled to open the door and jump out. 'None of your larks with me, or I'll give you one across the head.'

'O, let me go,' cried Edward; 'the fire is close by home.'

'Your home's Newgate, my fine fellow, for yet awhile. They'll have to do without us at the fire, wherever it may be.'

'It is Ebbsfleet that is on fire!' cried Edward; 'I can see the flames bursting from the balcony. O, for the love of God, Mr. Brass, take me there! There is a man concealed there who will be burnt alive.'

'My warrant says Newgate; and to Newgate you goes.'

Edward's cries and protestations were useless. Mr. Brass quitted not his hold of him till he had handed him safely over into the custody of the governor of Newgate, and there in a solitary cell

he was left to all the poignant anxiety, remorse, and uncertainty caused by his knowledge of this catastrophe, and his apprehension of the results that might ensue from it.

Chapter XXVI.

THE LIGHT BENEATH THE DOOR.

The baying of the dog still continued, a sepulchral muffled sound, as though it came from the bowels of the earth. Lucy sat up eagerly in bed and listened. Then she bethought her of the old dog in the warehouse. She had forgotten all about him till that moment. Poor old Scipio! Since Edward had gone, there had been nobody to look after him. Lucy was not fond of animals, but she was kind to them. It wasn't right, she said to herself, that the dog should suffer for their faults. But it was hardly likely she would be able to get to him. The warehouse was locked, and some one had carried off the keys. Was there no way of getting inside?

Lucy remembered that in the old days they used as children—her brother Ned and herself—to climb across a narrow ledge that ran just above high-water mark along the river face of the warehouse. Thence it was easy enough to clamber into the warehouse through an old broken window, which was never fastened. The way was easy enough to any one who knew it; and Lucy was in a mood that made a little danger acceptable to her. She went downstairs and found some biscuits, filled a pitcher with water, and took down a lamp and lit it. Then she went out into the yard and looked about her and listened. She could still hear the barking, a faint muffled sound that seemed to come from a far distance.

Lucy stepped lightly along the narrow ledge that ran along the basement of the warehouse. There was a strange light over her head, but she could not see what it meant. When she reached the window through which she had intended to make her way to the warehouse, she found it had been lately repaired, and was now fastened. It was almost impossible to turn back on the narrow slippery ledge; the window-frame afforded her something to hold on by, but a sudden dizziness and fear took possession of her. She looked down into the hurrying waters below her that were lapping fiercely amongst the piles, and the sight took away the little courage that was left her. In desperation she swung the heavy bag of biscuits against the newly-mended window and broke it in; thrusting her hand among the jagged pieces of broken glass, she shot back the bolt, threw open the casement, and found her way inside.

Within the air was hot and stifling, and she was almost overpowered by the mephitic vapours that met her. From the farther end of the long low room came a dull red glow; it was from Ed-

ward's workshop. Then Lucy bethought her of the charcoal brazier and soldering-pot that she had seen when she was last there. This pan of charcoal no doubt had been upset, and its contents had smouldered and set alight the shavings and sawdust with which the place was littered. For a moment she hoped that she might reach the seat of the fire and perhaps extinguish it before it gathered head, but with the opening of the window came a vast indraught of air that fanned the smouldering mass into a glow. Then Lucy turned to make her escape; but at that moment she heard the deep bay of the dog, with a wail of piteous entreaty in it. The sound seemed to come from below, from beneath her very feet.

There was yet time to save the poor dog from the fate that menaced him, if she could only find out where he was. Yes, he must be in the vaulted chamber below, old Paston's den, which Edward and she had discovered together. The trap-door that led into the vault was close at hand. With a great effort she raised it, and the bark and howl of the dog now rang out clear and distinct. The ladder was in its place, and Lucy hurried down to the archway and pushed open the outer door, which was unlocked, and swung open easily enough.

'Come, Scipio, come, old dog!' she cried. The dog recognised her voice and ceased his barking, whined, and wagged his tail, but would not move from his station at the threshold of the inner portal. 'Perhaps he is chained,' said Lucy, balancing in her mind for a moment whether she should turn and save herself or try once more to save the dog. She would make another effort. She placed her lamp upon the floor whilst she went to Scipio to examine his collar and unloose him if he were chained. In turning round, her draperies swept against the lamp and overturned it, the light went out with a sputter and fizz, and she was left in darkness.

She was about to turn and run for her life when, to her amazement and terror, she saw shining underneath the inner door a line of bright light. As the dog ceased his noise the door began to jar and rattle. Some one was shaking it. A voice was crying out 'Help! help!' Who's voice? Great heaven, it was John's! And the door was massive and strong, locked with a secure lock.

Smoke was pouring down from above, hot stifling vapours were filling up the vault.

Lucy threw herself down upon the floor. She put her lips to the crevice of the door, where the light shone between the door and the threshold.

'John,' she cried, 'is it you, darling? Are you really John?'

'Yes, I am John. Lucy, open the door quick, quick; I am stifling!'

'I cannot,' she cried; 'it is fast locked, and I have not the key.'

Chapter XXVII.

FIRE AND WATER.

A great fire in the City! The sky of crimson flecked with flakes of yellow flame; a huge cloud of smoke hanging like a pall in mid-air. A hum and roar and indescribable turmoil and confusion everywhere widening and spreading in concentric waves. Travellers coming in to-night by rail over viaducts and endless embankments stare wonderingly at the vortex of fire into which they are being hurried, as if all of a sudden the gates of pandemonium were opened upon them. Far down the river, mariners and seamen, and the boatmen who haunt the shores, catch sight of the wondrous glow shining redly over marshes and reaches, and tingeing the white sails with its Tyrian hue. Far away, clerks, at supper in their snug abodes in Brixton or Camberwell, see the crimson flare in the sky, and straightway, taking guidance from the flames, hurry Citywards, quaking for their stools and ledgers. All the floating wreck and lumber of London, the great army of loafers, cadgers, thieves, takes marching order, and pours its masses upon that nucleus of fire. Away among the Surrey hills and round about Middlesex, from Staines to Tottenham—wherever the chiefs of commerce fare sumptuously among hanging gardens, fairy lawns, and luxuriant shrubberies—the fiery cross rears itself above enclosing trees, and strikes a chilly doubt to the heart of many a City Crœsus.

A great fire in the City! In the very heart of its warehouses and docks and storehouses rich with the gathered wealth of the universal globe. What possibilities of ruin and disaster, of frightful waste and profitless destruction, lie within these simple words! That shower of sparks is all the outcome of summer's toil and winter's thrift to a whole community of husbandmen. For that flickering tongue of flame, a hundred ships have ploughed the seas, a thousand seamen toiled at sail and rope, and braved the dangers of the deep, to find the fuel. That huge roll of velvet smoke slashed with puffs of rich scarlet flame consumes the wealth of the richest trader of the City. No life lost, say you? The end and aim of half a hundred lives went up to heaven in that one fiery gust.

The fire that raged that night in the City had its origin at Ebbsfleet Wharf. A huge drysalter's warehouse abutted on the wharf, crammed almost to bursting with combustible stores, that had caught the flames at once; and now, right along the river-front, the buildings were crackling to destruction. All round the line of devoted buildings—among narrow passages leading nowhere, narrow courts and streets where tall warehouses shut out all but the narrowest strip of sky—crowds of curious spectators converged upon the fire, against whom the police, deployed here and there along the line,

maintained an intermittent futile resistance. Long lines of snake-like hose meandered here and there along the gutters; little jets of water spouting from their seams, and turning the lanes into sloppy rivulets. Ever and again, with a great clash and roar, some belated engine would cleave a passage through the shrinking crowd; whilst from out of the glowing nucleus of fire came the roar of flames, the intermittent beat of the engines, and the crackling hiss of streams of water, that seemed like the squirting of toys against that huge incandescent mass. In the middle of it all flits the ubiquitous penny-a-liner, with his coat-pockets crammed with flimsy, snatching information from one and another policeman, potman, fireman, or casual loafer, and straightway converting it into profitable 'copy.'

Markwood, with Patty and Margaret Bilfil on his arms, hurried away from Tower-hill towards the fire; Patty eagerly pouring into his ear the story about John Jones, and the reason there was for keeping him locked up in the vault, and of the imminent danger there was that he would be destroyed in the fire, if it were really raging there.

'And then,' said Patty breathlessly, 'what chance would there be for Ned? They would find the body, and brand him as a murderer, and hunt him down wherever he might go. And I have the keys,' cried Patty, holding up the large key of the warehouse, and the smaller one of the inner vault; 'and nobody can get to him, or know anything about him.'

It was not till then that Markwood realised that the story she had told him was a true one. But the sight of the keys convinced him, and he hurried on faster and faster. The fire was spreading rapidly, and throwing a glare like the light of day over everything. They were soon challenged by a picket of police, who told them they could not advance any farther.

'It's a matter of life and death!' cried Markwood. 'Take me instantly to the chief of the fire-brigade.'

'We don't know where he is,' said the policeman; 'but pass on, and look for him yourselves.'

Markwood left his companions under the care of the police, and pushed on.

After sundry rebuffs and mistakes, and running into imminent peril from falling walls and jets of fire, he found out the captain of the brigade, and told him how that a human life was in danger, and volunteered to lead a forlorn hope to search the burning warehouse. The captain listened impatiently to the story.

'If there's anybody left in Ebbsfleet,' he cried, 'he's a cinder. The place is gutted, and nothing left but red-hot bricks; and I'll not allow any of my men to risk their lives on such a wild-goose attempt.'

Markwood found out Patty, with a grave pale face.

'It's all over,' he said; 'there's no hope!'

'Then it's all over with Ned, too,' she cried, 'and with me—we are both of us murderers!'

'Stop!' cried Markwood, 'there is one chance yet; there is an inlet that runs under the old warehouse; it opens on to the river; it must be there that the vault you tell me of is placed. I will get a boat, and row about in front of the place.'

Markwood knew the neighbourhood perfectly, and in a few moments brought them to a narrow stair leading down to the river, at the foot of which were moored a couple of wherries.

'I shall take French leave!' cried Markwood, as he cast off the painter, and took the sculls in his hands. The two girls followed him into the boat, and presently they were afloat on the glowing stream.

The sight from the river was grand and awful. A whole row of warehouses was on fire. The drysalter's store next to Ebbsfleet was blazing and flaring in fierce many-coloured flames. Sundry barrels of oil had burst, and their blazing contents had run off into the river, covering the surface of the stream with a film of liquid fire; flaming rafters and showers of melted glass and boiling lead were falling hissing into the waters. It was Phlegethon—the lake of burning fire—it seemed all blood; the ripples of it were tongues of flame: the low-lying shore opposite, the black gloomy buildings, the white bridges standing out in ghostly distinctness, their lamps shining pale and yellow in the glare; the tangled tracery of mast and spar and sheet and shroud, the floating craft that darted to and fro, freighted with dark melancholy shadows, formed a picture of weird and striking power and grandeur.

Patty covered her eyes with her hands as the boat shot forth into the full glare of the conflagration. There was no chance for a poor human being in all this whirlpool of fire.

'Can you row?' said Markwood to Patty, as she sat gazing horror-struck at the lurid spectacle.

'Yes,' she said, with a start; 'why do you ask?'

'Take these sculls,' he said, 'and paddle gently about; don't lose sight of that skeleton balcony, where the flames are bursting out, that the stream of water is playing upon.'

Markwood had taken off his coat and waistcoat, folding them carefully up, and now kicked off his shoes, placing them upon one of the thwarts.

'What are you going to do?' cried Margaret.

'Only for a dive,' said Markwood. 'I'll see if there's anybody alive in Ebbsfleet.'

'Don't risk your life,' cried Margaret. 'Why should you throw it away for nothing?'

'Give me that key, Miss Robinson,' cried Markwood. 'You're

sure there's no mistake about the vault opening out of the channel?'

'There's no mistake; but it's too late now.'

'I know the spot exactly,' mused Markwood, 'where the channel flows into the river, just under that flaming balcony. The warehouse is strongly built in that corner, and it looks as if it had resisted the fire so far. I'll try!'

So saying, Markwood stepped into the stern of the boat, and gathered himself together for a dive. He was an excellent swimmer and diver—accomplishments rare among Englishmen—who, shut in by cold and stormy seas, rarely acquire any great skill or confidence in the water. But Markwood's father had been a storekeeper in Malta, and he had spent his boyhood there, and had acquired in the warm and sunny Mediterranean a real love of and pleasure in an amphibious life. To him, therefore, the enterprise was not so hopeless as it might have been to a feebler swimmer; still it was fraught with much peril. Merely for the chance of saving a stranger's life, he wouldn't have risked it. But so much hung upon that life. If the body of John Jones were discovered after the fire, as it surely would be, half-calcined in the underground vault, there would be little chance of Edward Hulse escaping arraignment and conviction for his murder. He would be pursued to America, and brought back without doubt.

'Don't go,' cried Margaret, beseechingly; 'don't throw away your life.'

Markwood smiled benignly at her. A sullen splash in the water—he had disappeared. Patty, the oars in her hands lighty paddling against the stream, watched the glowing waters with anxious eyes.

Chapter XXVIII.

A LION IN THE PATH.

The key was lying on the floor all the time—the duplicate key; Gilbert Paston had dropped the two keys on his sudden seizure, eighteen months ago and more. One had been found by the Hulses, the other had lain there unnoticed ever since. It might still be lying there, had not Lucy, in the gleam of light from under the door, seen the key and seized it.

To unlock the door was only the work of a moment.

'O John! dear John!' cried Lucy, when she saw her lover stand before her, pale, haggard, and unkempt. 'Are you really alive?' She put her hands upon him timidly, as if she half expected them to encounter some impalpable essence. John seized her hands, and gave her a hearty kiss. 'And you are not false to me, as they said you were, John?'

'No, I am true to you still, Lucy; it was all a mistake.'

'Then I am happy now, John; and if we die we will die together.'

'But we won't die yet, Lucy. Can't we get out of this place?'

'We will try; but the flames have spread awfully in the last moment; we are surrounded by fire; but we may still reach the window that overlooks the river. Come!'

Lucy led the way towards the opening, and John essayed to follow, but there was a lion in the path. The blind dog, Scipio, stood in the way, rigid and stiff, with coat erect, and sightless eyes glowing like coals of fire. He suffered Lucy to pass, but when John attempted to go by, the dog made at him open-mouthed with such fury that he was compelled to run back into the inner vault.

'Speak to him, Lucy,' he cried; 'pacify the dog, or he will tear me to pieces.'

Then Lucy tried to pacify the dog, stroked his bristly hair, hung about his shaggy neck, and prayed him to be quiet.

'Now, John,' she cried, 'whilst I hold him!' And he essayed again. But Scipio sprang from her weak grasp, and flew madly at the curate once more, so that he was obliged to give back. Standing in the narrow doorway, the dog held the command of the inner room, and defied his prisoner to escape.

'O, what shall we do, John?' cried Lucy despairingly. 'John, I won't leave you; we will die together;' and she passed into the inner room, and put her arm round him.

'I won't die!' cried John, who was all of a shiver with fear and excitement. 'That villanous dog! It is your brother who has murdered me. Help! help!'

He began to shout and cry out incoherently; Lucy wrung her hands in despair. The dressing-gown she had thrown over her—the loose Indian gown—had almost fallen from her white shoulders; the dog had trodden upon it, and still held a corner of it under his foot. With an instinct of maidenly modesty Lucy tried to gather it about her. The dog growled, but having sniffed at the robe let it go indifferently. Then in a moment an idea seized her. She took off the gown, and threw it over her lover's shoulders. It enveloped him like a cloak.

'Now, John,' she cried, 'he is blind; he can only tell by scent. Now try him, dear, and God bless you!'

John seized the idea at once, and marched forth. Scipio sniffed all round him suspiciously, seemed puzzled, growled doubtfully, but let him pass.

'Come, Lucy,' cried John, when he had safely reached the outer vault. 'He can't come.'

Lucy passed him too, and Scipio, confounded at this manœuvre, began to bark furiously into the now empty room, as though challenging his prisoner to come forth.

BLIND SCIPIO. Edmund Evans, sc.

'Up the ladder,' cried Lucy; 'there is a window open!'

But between them and the window was a chasm of fire. They were cut away altogether from the outer world. There was only the choice before them—fire or water—to burn or to drown.

The tide was plashing sullenly beneath them in its narrow channel. The heat was becoming insupportable. A little more, and life would fail them altogether.

'Is there an entrance to the river?' cried John hoarsely.

'There is an archway, but it is under water.'

'No matter, I can dive,' cried John.

'Then go; jump into the stream, and dive under the archway; you will be in the river then, and there are sure to be boats. Good-bye, John.'

'Hang it! no, I can't leave you,' cried John, in indecision.

'You must, John; you can't save me; and you are bound to do it. Think of your father,' panted out Lucy, and then sank to the ground.

But John had had time to think; the first instinctive movement to self-preservation he had repressed. He was not physically a coward, and he felt that it would degrade him to escape himself and leave Lucy to perish. And yet, Lucy was fainting—was almost insensible. If she were dead it would be his duty to save himself. Well, she was as good as dead; the pang of death was over with her; and it was horrible to die by fire. His thoughts hung upon a balance that a breath might turn either way.

Suddenly a head protruded itself from the dark turbid water, and a dripping arm reached upwards to the sill of the outer doorway of the vault. The apparition was so wonderful and unexpected, that Jones involuntarily gave a shout, half of joy half of wonder.

'Hullo! are you there? Are you Jones the curate? That's right. I'm Markwood,' said the head. 'Come along, there isn't a moment to lose. Can you dive? That's right; in with you after me, and under the archway. I've a boat outside.'

'But Lucy's here,' cried John, coming to his senses. 'Lucy Hulse.'

'O Lord!' said Markwood, 'that's serious. How shall we manage? There's room for one to dive under the archway, but not for two. What can we do?'

'We must save ourselves,' said John hoarsely. 'Lucy is insensible.'

What was it right to do? Half a moment to decide on what might puzzle a jury of casuists for a twelvemonth! Markwood thought of his motherless babes, he thought of all that was hanging on to his life. It was his duty no doubt to save himself, and leave Lucy to perish, but he couldn't do it.

A roar and turmoil overhead, as if the world were coming to an

end. Markwood instinctively ducked under the water, John drew back within the vault. There was a shower of hot burning bricks; the side of the warehouse had fallen in with a huge crash; they were likely to be buried in the ruins. Happily the wall was solid and well-built, and a portion of it, holding together in a mass, had fallen across the channel of the stream, and had formed a sort of roof over it, and the fall had broken down the archway. There was now a great gap there, open to the sky and the stars.

'That saves us all,' said Markwood, coming up to the surface spluttering. 'Lower the girl into the water, and we'll each take an arm.'

It was no easy matter to win through all the fiery floating débris, encumbered as they were with the senseless form of Lucy, but they did win through it; and presently a couple of black heads appeared at the gunwale of the boat, leaving a ripple of seething water behind them.

'It is a miracle,' said Patty, clasping her hands in thankfulness.

Margaret was strong and capable, and Lucy was quickly dragged into the boat over the stern. The two men followed.

'Does she live?' whispered John tremulously.

'There is no sign of life,' cried Patty; 'but let us hope. Pull quickly for the shore.'

Just then the lower part of the warehouse collapsed and fell in with a great noise; but over all the turmoil of the falling building could be heard a cry of pain and terror, almost human in its piteousness.

'I forgot Scipio,' said Markwood, looking anxiously into the blazing crater of fire. 'Poor dog, it is all over with him now!'

'Poor Scipio!' said Patty; 'he was faithful to the last.'

Chapter XXIX.

THE END OF ALL THINGS.

Mr. Brass, the detective, was abroad early in the morning after the fire. He had all his work cut out in the way of getting together sufficient evidence to justify the magistrate in remanding the prisoner,—for he was to be brought up at the Thames Police-court that very morning. The fire at Ebbsfleet had given him materials for thought, but nothing could be done in that quarter now. The ruins were still red hot, and would not be accessible for some days. Nor did Mr. Brass expect any important revelations from Ebbsfleet; his belief was strong in the deal box with the tin lining, which was to be opened that morning in the presence of the chief-surgeon of the police force. He had given Edward Hulse great credit for his sagacity in regard to that box.

'It's difficult to work a murder case without a body,' said Mr. Brass to himself; 'but when you carries it along with you, why, naturally you nonplush everybody.'

Mr. Brass had come to know that Patty Robinson was the last person who had seen the curate of St. Saveall's alive. She was an adverse witness too, the suspected man being her sweetheart; but if she could be got to speak to having seen him enter Ebbsfleet on the night of his disappearance, it would be a great point. Mr. Brass therefore resolved to see her himself, and ascertain how the land lay.

On his way to Trinity-square he passed the Tower, an edifice he held in a good deal of contempt.

'Them was dark ages indeed when the poor creturs had no better prison than that to be put in. Talk of your grenadiers and your beefeaters—bah! Why, the crown-jewels ain't safe among 'em. The magsmen'll nobble the ryeglaia some of these days, and then there'll be a nice job for us to work out; leastways, if they be there, which I doubt. They say as all the jewels and gold are locked up in the Bank of England, and so there ain't nothing here but duffers for the public to gape at. And it's likely enough. I wouldn't trust them bearskinned chaps with nothing else. Holding out their guns and whispering rubbish to one another, and then parading up and down like so many tom-cats,—Lord, I ain't patience with 'em.'

This was the view taken of the military by a civilian, who perhaps was unduly biassed by professional jealousy.

When Mr. Brass arrived at the corner house, where Mrs. Robinson lived and let lodgings, he found, standing by the curb opposite her door, a neat little brougham, with a useful hard-working horse in the shafts and a patient-looking coachman on the box. Unmistakably a doctor's brougham; and as the door opened and a man descended briskly the steps, it was enough to see that he was the owner of the conveyance and a medical practitioner.

Mr. Brass, with that ready civility which was characteristic of him, opened the door of the brougham for the doctor to enter, and touched his hat.

'How's the young lady this morning, sir?' he cried.

The doctor shook his head: 'High fever—great prostration—hope the best.' Then he took up the *Lancet* that was lying on the front seat, and was presently lost to view.

Mr. Brass had jumped to the conclusion that Patty was the person for whom the doctor was in attendance.

'It's been too much for her, poor gal,' was his muttered reflection as he tapped gently at the door.

Mrs. Robinson, her hair tightly wound up in curl-papers, looking very fierce and restive, opened the door a few inches, and peeped out.

'Well, how's your young lady by this time, Mrs. Robinson?' said Mr. Brass benignantly.

'Who wants to know?' cried Mrs. Robinson. 'What's your business, sir, if you please?'

'Well, I wanted a few words with her,' said Brass, jerking his thumb towards his shoulder; 'but as she's so poorly, poor gal—'

'And, pray, who told you she was poorly, and whom do you want to see, and what's your business?'

'Patty Robinson,' said Mr. Brass, becoming stiff all of a sudden. 'I'm Inspector Brass, of the City Police, and I want to see your daughter on important business; and if she ain't fit to be seen, I must have a doctor's certificate to that effect.'

Mrs. Robinson slammed the door in his face, and Mr. Brass heard or saw nothing more for about five minutes. Then the door opened, and Patty Robinson stood before him.

'Well, Mr. Brass,' she said, 'what do you want?'

The detective was quite startled. He had made up his mind that his witness was ill in bed, and here she was before him in full health and vigour.

'I've a few questions to ask you on a matter of importance, miss, and perhaps I'd better step in and speak to you in private.'

'Come in, Mr. Brass,' said Patty. 'Don't make a noise, please, because we've a young lady here very ill.'

Patty led the way into the dining-room, a dingy chamber on the ground floor.

'Now, miss,' said Mr. Brass, taking out his note-book and putting on his most professional aspect, 'have the goodness to tell me if you know a gentleman of the name of John Jones, the curate of St. Saveall's.'

'Certainly, I do,' said Patty.

'And when was the last time you saw him? Mind, miss, I know all about the matter, and you'll be examined on oath by and by.'

'Let's see,' said Patty, knitting her brows and pursing up her mouth; 'I couldn't speak exactly.'

'But you must speak exactly, do you hear? I know the whole thing, miss; so speak out, and speak the truth.'

'Well, Mr. Brass, it might be five minutes ago, or it might be ten; but I think it was something betwixt and between.'

'Come, no nonsense,' said Brass savagely; 'I don't come here to be made a fool of.'

'If it's so particular that you shouldn't be made a fool of,' said Patty, 'I'll go and look at the clock; but I shouldn't think a minute or two would make the difference. Or stay, perhaps you'd like to see him yourself, as he's likely to know his own business best.'

Mr. Brass was too much nonplussed to reply, and Patty slipped out, and presently there entered a young man in clerical apparel, looking very pale and haggard, but still composed and calm.

'You want to see me, Mr. Inspector Brass,' he said, looking calmly at him. 'I am John Jones, the curate of St. Saveall's.'

'Come, I'm blessed,' muttered Mr. Brass between his teeth; 'there's some kid about this. Well, sir,' he said aloud, 'I'm not acquainted with your person, sir, and if you are what you say, I must observe that you've played a very cruel trick on your father and Sir Pantlin; yes, sir, and tried to defeat the ends of justice, sir!'

'I don't understand you,' said Jones with hauteur. 'I have been away from home for a few days, and I find that a great fuss has been made and several innocent people put to great distress. I hope the officers of justice are prepared to justify the extraordinary steps they have taken.'

'I've acted under instructions, sir,' said Mr. Brass stiffly. 'Precious good job I took that indemnity,' he muttered to himself. 'Come, sir, I suppose you'll have no objection to go along with me to Fenton's Hotel, to be identified by the archdeacon?'

'They're coming here directly,' said Jones; 'I've sent for them. You won't mind my leaving you for a few moments, but I am in great anxiety just now. A young lady, to whom I am deeply attached, is lying betwixt life and death.'

'Not Miss Lucy, sir?' cried Brass. 'Well, I'm sorry for that, sir. She were very fond of you, sir, you may take your davy. Perhaps you know that I've got a prisoner in custody along of this here job? The young lady's brother—no other—locked up in Newgate.'

'What, Edward Hulse? Why, I was told he had started for America.'

'So he had, sir, but we brought him back.'

'That's fortunate, for one thing. You must bring him here; she's been calling most piteously for her brother.'

Mr. Brass rubbed his forehead meditatively.

'Well, sir, as things is as they is, I don't see as there is any objection to that. I suppose, as expense is no particular object, and cabs—'

'Use the utmost expedition, Mr. Brass, without regard to expense,' cried John, following Mr. Brass to the door, opening it gently, and standing on the steps outside.—'Ah, here comes my father.'

The archdeacon and Sir Pantlin at this moment hurried up to the door.

'John, John! O, where have you been?' cried the archdeacon.

'Yes, you dog!' shouted Sir Pantlin. 'What do you mean by it? Come, explain yourself.'

John put his fingers to his lips.

'Hush!' he said. 'Lucy is lying here betwixt life and death.'

Mr. Brass meanwhile has hastened to Newgate. He has some

little preliminary difficulty in obtaining the release of Edward Hulse; but with the aid of one of the visiting-justices, who happens to be in the prison, this is soon arranged, and the two are presently hastening towards Tower-hill.

'One thing puzzles me,' said Mr. Brass. 'What's in that box as you took so much pains about?'

'Only a camera and some photographic apparatus. I meant to set up in that line in the States.'

'O, that's all, is it? And was that what you meant it for from the first?'

To this question, however, Edward deliberately turned a deaf ear.

Lucy was lying sick unto death in the best bedroom of the Robinsons' house in Trinity-square. The exposure and excitement she had undergone had overmastered the current of her life. A pale City flower, she withered away under the stormy blasts that had been loosened upon her. Everything that her heart might desire waited for her. The husband of her choice, sweeter to her by far than the most chivalrous and unselfish of the outer world, comparative wealth, and the power of bestowing happiness; but she could not raise her hand to gather these gifts—she had got her death-blow, and could not rally against it.

And in her weakness and collapse her ideas ran once more in the channels of her girlhood and maiden life; the intrusive passion that had turned her thoughts another way, had lost its all-engrossing power; she yearned for the accustomed faces—for her father and her brother, but chiefly for the latter, and for him she incessantly called in the semi-delirium of her sinking state. She seemed full of strange remorse and terror, and would not be pacified by any of them. Her mother watched by her bedside; her lover was constantly in and out. She turned away peevishly from these, and called continually for Edward.

Presently John came up with a shade of satisfaction in his face. He made his way on tiptoe to the head of the bed where Lucy was lying, her tangled hair scattered over the pillow, her great restless eyes throwing wandering glances from side to side, a hectic flush on each cheek, the rest of her face pale and colourless.

'Edward is coming,' he whispered, and seated himself by her side, taking her waxen hand in his. Her eyes grew less restless, and settled upon the face of her lover; there was the faintest smile upon her wan lips, he felt the feeblest pressure from the hand he held in his.

The time seemed long waiting. The sounds from the outer world of life came with strange distinctness and new meaning into the hushed chamber. The passing wheels, the postman's sounding knock, the cries of the costermongers, a ringing bugle-call from the Towerward,—these sounds broke into the sad dull thoughts of the

watchers with a sharp distressful ring about them, reminding them of the small account their sharpest heart-pangs were to the great living world without.

He came at last; a cab stopped at the door, and an eager voice was heard outside asking for his 'sister.' His footstep was on the staircase; he entered, and Lucy seemed to revive at the sound, and half sat up in bed, stretching out her arms eagerly towards the door.

'Ned,' she cried, as he put his arm round her and kissed her, 'do you forgive me?'

'If I have aught to forgive, I do.'

'You have a great deal to forgive; but, Ned, it has seemed all like a troubled dream, and one does things in dreams that would seem impossible at other times. Is father here?'

'No; he has sailed—for America.'

'You will follow him, Ned, and tell him, when you see him, that I sent my best love to him; and kiss me, Ned. I'm tired—O, so tired.'

She sank back on her pillow quite exhausted, and lay for a while as still as if she were really dead; but presently she revived a little, and John asked her if she would like his father to come and pray at her bedside. She assented with a sweet smile. Presently the archdeacon's gray head was bowed against the bright checked counterpane, and he read the prayers of the Church in a low broken voice.

After that Lucy whispered that she would like to be alone with John; and everybody else withdrew.

'Feel in the pocket, John, of the dress that hangs on the wall yonder; there is a letter,' she whispered.

He felt in the pocket of the dress with a strange mingled feeling. Among the confused assortment of a girl's little treasures,—a thimble, a silver-mounted tape measure he had given her, an almanac as big as a thumbnail, and a little case that held needle and thread and scissors that had often been used for his benefit, as with deft fingers she would replace some missing button on wrist or neckband,—there, too, was a letter, his own letter, as he recognised with a flush of shame, the letter of renunciation that he had hoped had been destroyed.

'Tear it up, John,' she said; 'destroy it. Let the thought of it never come between us; for you will think of me sometimes, John, when I am gone. It was a cruel letter, John, but you had repented of it, and you were coming to see me just as usual. I'm so glad of that.'

Lucy seemed to sleep, with John's hand in hers; presently she awoke, and looked wildly about her.

'John,' she cried, in a hoarse whisper, 'things are very hard.

Why are they so hard? Is there no help? John, can't you help me? Keep me, John, keep me with you; don't let me go!'

Life was ebbing away in waves as it were—little difference from moment to moment—but then a wave, and lo! a great recession; the soul that looks out from those glazing eyes farther and farther away. Who can save? Who can help? The dim inevitable presence hovering there is inexorable. The paralysing hand—the cold destroying hand, cruel, remorseless—will it lift a finger for all our tears and prayers?

Draw the curtains closely to, and leave the cold solemn chamber to solitude and silence. The end has come, and there is little of consolation left, except to know that it shall also come for us in good time with merciful oblivion.

Sorrows come in like the tide; a long space of comparative calm —and then billow after billow. Hardly had Edward Hulse realised the fact of his sister's death when the news came to him of his father's. An account of the catastrophe on board the steamer had been brought home by a passing vessel, and made some little sensation; Mr. Bilfil having been a well-known man, and the manner of his death remarkable. It was a great comfort to Edward Hulse, however, to find that Patty Robinson had been safe at home all the time of his absence, and that the plaid shawl that had caused him so much anguish of mind had, at that particular time, adorned the shoulders of Mr. Bilfil's lawful wife. There was considerable pleasure, too, in the discovery that a codicil had been found to Gilbert Paston's will, and that John Jones had succeeded in saving from the fire this very satisfactory document. At the same time it added poignancy to his grief that Lucy was not alive to share the good fortune.

The validity of the codicil was duly established; and as soon as the matter admitted of no doubt, Edward married his sweetheart, Patty, in a very quiet way; and they settled down in a comfortable house in the north-west of London. Edward bought a share in a good practice, and is now a wealthy respected citizen.

Mrs. Bilfil, released from the irksome bonds of an unsuitable alliance, tempted fortune again, bestowing her hand upon Markwood, and becoming a mother to his five children. To her husband she is a source of pride, warm affection, and constant disquietude. Being a man, however, of great aptitude for affairs, he gets through his life with satisfaction and success; but he has less time than of old to devote to other people's business. It is satisfactory to add, that, partly in consideration of his new connection, and partly as a reward for long and faithful services, Mr. Paston, his employer, has raised his salary considerably; which is a marvellous thing, when you come to think of it.

John Jones is now Rector of Pumptrisaint, and engaged to be married to his cousin—a lady of faded personal attractions, but with

a very nice freehold farm or two, which will nick-in very nicely to Sir Pantlin's estate, should that worthy baronet—who has no male heirs—bequeath, as everybody supposes he will, his property to his godson.

One of the pleasantest uses that Edward can make of his good fortune is to entertain with sumptuous hospitality his old friend Markwood. Mrs. Markwood does not often visit them, as she and Patty don't agree very well. Perhaps Patty is a little overbearing, being a woman of importance now, whose favourable opinion might make the fortune of a briefless barrister. For her husband places great reliance upon her judgment, and is guided in most things by her advice. But when Markwood can steal an odd evening in the long vacation sometimes, when all the women-folk are out of town, and enjoy a dinner alone with his old friend Ned Hulse, he is in the very tip-top of pleasant enjoyment.

'Tell you what, Ned,' said Markwood, on one of these occasions,—he was admiringly contemplating the colour of a bumper of '47 port, holding it against the light,—'when I first saw you and your wife that was to be together on board the steamboat that day, I never thought that any good would come of it. Nor more there does, generally, in unequal marriages. But after all, the great thing is to get a woman to suit you, and one that will go with you through thick and thin. And having found her, Ned, you naturally stick to her, as she stuck to you—through fire and water.'

DOING BUSINESS IN PARIS

To talk of doing business in Paris must to many persons appear as absurd as to speak of enjoying oneself in Cheapside, or taking pleasure in Cornhill. And yet there is, perhaps, no city in Europe in which business of a certain kind—financial and monetary matters on a very large scale—is carried on to a greater extent than in 'the capital of civilisation,' as its inhabitants love to designate the beautiful town on the banks of the Seine. Nay, what is more, there is perhaps no place in the world in which men of all classes and degrees are so universally given to dabble in shares and various investments as in Paris. From the millionnaire banker to the humble *bonne* or woman servant, nearly every living soul in the capital of France has more or less money laid out in government loans or other securities, which they are perpetually buying, selling, exchanging, repurchasing and reselling, always in the hope of making something, no matter how little, in the way of profit. In no town in the whole world—'bar none' as they say in the ring—is speculation in shares or stocks so universal as in Paris. The tailor who makes your coat has his regular broker who calls upon him every day, and takes his orders as to what he is to purchase and what to sell on the Bourse. The waiter who attends on you at the Café Anglais or Voisin's knows to a fraction the last quotation of the share list, and whilst serving the fish is calculating whether it will be more profitable to retain or to sell at once the scrip he holds in the last Ottoman loan. I knew a case not many months ago of a *maître d'hôtel*, or butler, who gave up his place—and a very good place it was—in an English gentleman's family, because their luncheon hour, 2 P.M., prevented him from visiting the Bourse and transacting his little share speculations every day. In all the swell clubs the members, almost to a man, have their *affaires de Bourse*, and buy or sell daily through their respective brokers, to their profit or loss. To form some idea of how universal this spirit of speculation is in Paris, a stranger ought to go to the Rue Lafitte on the second or third day of the month—the day upon which the coupons, or interest, is paid upon foreign shares. He will see at the gate of Rothschild's banking house some thousands of persons — small shopkeepers, artisans, servants (male and female), and all who cannot afford to pay a broker to do their business for them, forming a *queue*, and waiting patiently for hours until their turn comes to enter the office, show their scrip, and receive their dividends. And when we remember

that a similar scene is being enacted at the doors of perhaps a dozen large banking establishments in Paris, some idea may be formed as to the spread of speculation amongst all classes of French people. And, strange to say, it is amongst those most given to pleasure and excitement that this spirit of share gambling is to be found. The actresses at the various theatres, the ladies of the half world, the men who, to all outward appearance, spend their nights in playing baccarat, their forenoons in bed, their afternoons in breakfasts at Bignon's or the Café Anglais—breakfasts which commence at noon and last until 2 P.M.—and so pass on to the Bois, thence to a late dinner, and so to the opera, and back again to baccarat—all these are more or less given to Bourse speculation, all employ their stockbrokers, and all will tell you that they rarely if ever lose in their speculations. And yet in a city where every one invests in scrip of some kind, and where everybody is ever trying to turn something by his investments, it would be difficult to mark one class more than another as given to speculation.

Business in Paris commences at a very much earlier hour than in London. By 7 o'clock in summer and 8 in winter, business men who want to see other business men, stockbrokers who want to see their clients, or merchants who want to conclude bargains, are up and on foot. The banks, it is true, do not open until 9 A.M., but in all the great financial establishments the heads of offices are at their posts, the letters are opened, and the campaign of the day decided upon, an hour earlier than this. From 8 A.M. to noon is the busiest time of the day. At the latter hour, all who have not to be present at the Bourse go to breakfast, and consider that their hardest work is over. With business men in Paris, breakfast is the heartiest meal in the day, and the time spent at it perhaps the most enjoyable of the twenty-four hours. They do not hurry themselves. Having been up since 7 or 8, and taken nothing more substantial than a cup of coffee and a roll, they are hungry enough by noon to do full justice to what is set before them. With hats and overcoats hung up, napkins deliberately spread on knee, and general take-it-easy appearance, they show a marked contrast to the London City man, eating his luncheon against time, and injuring his health, if not shortening his days, by the manner in which he gulps down his food. In Paris the *déjeuner* is a rest in the day's labour. The worst of the work is then over; what follows is merely child's play to what has gone before. Letters have to be written or signed; the result of the day's Bourse will have to be discussed, and plans for the next day have to be made. But the real head work—the talk by which a man makes this bargain, conciliates that creditor, or gets substantial security out of that debtor—is over, and the Parisian working brain is relaxed, and released from its worry for the day. The habits of the business man in Paris are as different from

those of a London City man as it is possible to imagine. The former works to live; the latter lives to work. The Londoner, who day after day breakfasts at 8.30 A.M., goes in to town some four or five miles by rail, works incessantly from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M., and then returns home to eat a late dinner, go to bed, and recommence next day the self-same round of horse-in-the-mill work, can hardly be said to lead a joyous existence—at least, not in the eyes of a Parisian man of business, who would almost as soon be condemned to penal servitude as to lead such a monotonous life. The Bourse may rise or fall; exchange on London may be favourable or the contrary; the price of *articles de Paris* may be quoted at remunerative prices or at a dead loss in Berlin;—your Paris man of business, in spite of whatever may happen, stops work at 5 P.M., the 'absinthe hour' as it is called—when every right-minded Frenchman deems it his bounden duty to proceed to his favourite café, and there, with either absinthe, vermuth, bitters, or some other stimulant to appetite, to prepare his stomach for the great affair called dinner, which will follow about an hour later; for a little moderate and temperate preprandial drinking is quite as essential to the comfort and wellbeing of the Gaul as was the after-dinner port to the Englishman, or as is the after-dinner toddy to our friends north of the Tweed.

But although a Parisian man of business stops work at 5 P.M., his labours for the day by no means end there. The Londoner's life of business may be monotonous, but at any rate when he leaves his office he bids farewell to all care until next morning. Not so the Frenchman; he, so to speak, dilutes his work, and takes sips more or less large of it all the twenty-four hours, or at least until he goes to sleep. The two hours he consumes for his breakfast in the middle of the day are followed by perhaps three hours of work. During the 'absinthe hour' he talks, but chiefly upon business. When he goes home to dinner madame has to be told of all his gains or losses, his profits or the reverse, the letters he received, and the letters he answered throughout the day. An Englishman would think himself very hardly used if he had to take from his office in Mincing-lane to his residence in Stoke Newington a full account of all the business he had done since the morning. It would seem a great hardship if he could never get rid of his troubles—never be allowed to forget his annoyances and worries. But the Frenchman is otherwise. Woe betide him if madame and the rest of his womenkind, if he has any that are grown up, do not hear from his own mouth a full and exact account of all that has happened during the day. I remember some years ago passing a portion of the summer months with a Paris stockbroker, whose country-house was at Saint Germain. We used to leave the latter town every morning at 9.30, arrive in Paris about 10 A.M., separate for our respective work, and

meet again at the Saint Lazare station at 5 P.M., so as to reach home in ample time for a 6 o'clock dinner. My friend was a widower, and had living with him his mother, a widowed sister, besides two very charming young women, his daughters. Every evening on his return from Paris he used to give these four ladies a detailed account of all that had happened to him during the day: how certain stocks had risen and others fallen; how such a client had paid up in full his losses at the last settling; how such another one had let him in for so many thousand francs; and how he believed there would be such and such changes in public securities on the morrow. His womenkind took the deepest interest in everything he told them; and by the questions they put to him showed evidently that they recollected perfectly well all, or nearly all, he had told them on previous occasions of his business. It seems that he had some months previously done some Bourse transactions for a well-known Prince, who was a relative of the Emperor. The affair had gone wrong, and my friend had to pay up a very considerable sum for his client, which his client, it would seem, quite forgot to repay him, or at least had never done so. My friend's daughters, however, appeared on these matters to have a better memory than their father, and the younger one used to amuse me very much by asking him every two or three days, 'Eh bien, Papa, avez-vous des nouvelles de ce brigand le Prince Blanc?'

The wonderful amount of interest which all Frenchwomen take in the business of their husbands, fathers, or brothers, whether parliamentary, financial, trading, or what not, is one of the most singular facts connected with that very singular people. The wife of an English merchant, banker, or solicitor, as a rule, knows less of what her husband is doing in the City, or the Court, than if he transacted his business in another land. She would not only think herself greatly bored if he was to treat her to an account of what he had done all day in the City; but would, and not without reason, think that her 'gude man' had enough of business since the morning, and that it was now but just he should be talked to of other things, and on other subjects. But the French are very different in their ideas. With them—at least amongst the professional classes—there is little or no periodical reading. Magazines like *Blackwood*, *Fraser*, *Belgravia*, or *St. Pauls* are utterly unknown amongst them. Of their novels the less that is said the better; and it is the simple truth to say that whereas of every ten French romances one is most mawkish impossible trash, the other nine invariably belong to that category of literature which with us is denominated as belonging to Holywell-street. To music, drawing, and what our young ladies call accomplishments, French ladies pay little or no attention after they leave school. The consequences are, that having little or no amusement to fall back upon within their homes, they take to business matters as what they call *une distraction*, and are often better up in the subject they talk

about than their fathers, brothers, or husbands; for an average Frenchwoman is beyond controversy cleverer in every way than an ordinary Frenchman.

But in Paris business does not end with the dinner-hour. No sooner has the business man finished that meal than he proceeds to his beloved Boulevards, there to learn what are the quotations of shares and stocks upon what is called *la petite Bourse*, a kind of irregular Exchange held outside Tortoni's every evening from 9 to 11 o'clock. And even if he has no interest in the rise and fall of the funds, the Paris man of business devotes all his evening to talking of business, and paving the way for the work of to-morrow. Frenchmen cannot understand the dislike Englishmen have to mix up business and home matters. If a Parisian man of business wants to see you on what he deems a matter of importance, failing to find you at the café or on the Boulevard, he will go to your house, enter your family circle, and say his say, no matter who may be present. If he has any chance or hopes of making money by the affair, attempt not to escape from him, for you will find it impossible. Not only to your own, but to your friend's house will he follow you, to the drawing-room, the ball, or the theatre,—it is all one to him. *Les affaires avant tout* has now become a kind of axiom in France, and every one who is in any way mixed up in business seems to agree to the principle.

But it is what may be called irregular business in which a Frenchman of the present day comes out stronger than perhaps at any other time. Let us, for instance, suppose that a line of railway between the towns of Protern and La Vache has been projected. The scheme is good; the levels are taken; the local authorities approve, and only three things are wanting to carry out the plans: viz. (1) that the capital should be subscribed; (2) that the caution or guarantee money should be paid; and (3) that the concession be obtained. To do all this it is necessary to repair to Paris. You, being agent for the proposed company, address yourself to one of the great financial societies, with a view of getting that establishment to take upon itself the risk of subscribing the capital. That you will in the end get what you want done is certain; but it is equally certain that it will be a matter of time, and considerable time too, before the business can be carried through. To obtain an audience with the president, or any of the leading directors of any great Paris financial establishment, is more difficult than to get an interview with a Cabinet Minister in England. The only way to succeed is to begin at the bottom of the tree, get introduced to one of the several deputy secretaries, and gradually—chiefly by dint of what is vulgarly called 'squaring'—make acquaintances higher and higher in the official hierarchy, until you come to know those who have an influential voice and vote in the business of the concern. Even then, even when you have been closeted with the president of the

society himself, deem not that your business is finished. The quick determination and decided opinion of business men in England are unknown in Paris. Even at the last moment, when you believe everything will turn out as you desire—after the president, the directors, and the sub-committees have sifted and talked over your affair, and seem on the point of adopting your project—it is quite possible that something or other will cause a reversion of opinion amongst them, and cause you to receive a final negative to your proposition. The French, although most honourable in business matters—always adhering to their word when it is once given—are not on the whole good men of business. They are either far too timid and vacillating, or much too rash and unthinking. They are far too given to look at a proposed business by what others say of it, and take much too little trouble to investigate matters for themselves. '*On dit*,' 'they say,' is always a great authority with them—very often greater and of far more influence than the testimony of engineers, the showing of plans, or the most authentic documents it is possible to procure. An instance of this which occurred to me will illustrate my meaning better than a page of generalisation. Not long ago, a company of English and French men wished to carry out an undertaking in the centre of France. They applied to one of the great Paris financial companies for the funds wanting, which were to be advanced in the shape of debentures. For ten weeks they were kept without a decided reply to their application. Every day some new plan was asked for; some new statement or other document required. There were interviews with the president, interviews with the vice-president, with the different secretaries of the various departments, and with a whole host of the minor officials; but nothing definite came of all this. Every now and then things looked as if a satisfactory determination had been arrived at; but this hope was as invariably lost, for whenever the projectors believed that their affairs would be brought to an end within a day or two, they were certain to receive a verbal communication—the *on dit* this thing or *on dit* the other—against their scheme; and thus they seemed only to roll the stone a yard or two up the hill, in order that it might be rolled back half-a-dozen yards or so, merely because *they say*'s objections were invariably listened to.

This most annoying state of suspense and uncertainty lasted, as I said before, for no less than ten weeks. At last the projectors got heartily tired of doing business in Paris, and proceeded to London, where they put their plans, projects, calculations, and general scheme before some English capitalists. The latter looked into the affair one Monday forenoon. On the same evening they dispatched an engineer, a practical chemist, an accountant, and a gentleman connected with a financial establishment to France. They arrived at their destination on Tuesday morning, and returned to London on

the following Saturday. On Monday they reported very highly to their employers concerning the affair; on Tuesday there was another interview between the capitalists and the projectors; on Wednesday all the documents were signed, and a cheque given for the money. Thus, in ten days English men of business decided a question which the French capitalists were unable to solve in ten weeks, although the scene of the operations lay, so to speak, at their very door.

On the other hand, French business men, if often cautious to a fault, are sometimes rash even to a folly. Let a report, no matter how improbable—a *canard*, no matter how wild—but get bruited abroad, and if it is likely to have any effect on the public funds or on certain stock and shares, the lead it gives will be followed without questioning by thousands of speculators with as much earnestness as if it had been promulgated by the Government itself. This is why such great and sudden rises and falls take place so often on the Paris Bourse, and why such large fortunes are made and lost there in the course of a single day. These great fluctuations also account in a large measure for the immense number of persons who—being altogether what we call in England 'outsiders'—are always to be found speculating in securities, of which in this country the general public know nothing whatever. Even in the provinces of France these investments by the working classes must amount to a very considerable sum. I have seen again and again at Versailles, Meaux, Tours, and Bordeaux, old peasant women who had come perhaps ten or a dozen miles to market in order to sell a few francs' worth of fruit, or poultry, or vegetables, go as a regular thing to one of the *agents de change*, and get the coupons of scrip they had in the Ottoman loan, or some of the American railways, cashed. I wonder how many females of this class in England would understand what is meant by foreign securities? But in France every one saves something out of his or her income, no matter how small that income may be; and when once even the most uneducated people have money—are what we term 'before the world'—they instinctively, as it were, seek a profitable means of investment for their savings.

M. LAING MEASON.

R. Caldecott, del. Edmund Evans, s

THE DOCTOR [illegible] ENDS.

BELGRAVIA

DECEMBER 1873

LOST FOR LOVE

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

CHAPTER IV.

'I am too old for mere play, too young to be without a wish. What can the world afford me? "Thou shalt renounce!" "Thou shalt renounce!" That is the eternal song which is rung in every one's ears; which, our whole life long, every hour is hoarsely singing to us.'

AFTER the luncheon in the painting-room came another dinner at Mr. Chamney's, a lesson twice a week, an intimacy which ripened daily—until after a fortnight of this rapid progress it suddenly occurred to Mr. Chamney that he ought to make his new friend, Leyburne, known to his old friend, Ollivant. The curious hazard that had brought about this friendship would be sure to interest the doctor; nor could he fail to be interested in that romantic notion which lurked unexpressed in the mind of Flora's father.

A little note from Mrs. Ollivant to Flora came just at this time:

'Dear Miss Chamney,—Why don't you come to see me? Perhaps I ought to have told you that I am an old woman—though you might see as much as that for yourself—with a rooted affection for my own fireside, so you must not expect visits from me. We are so near each other that I think I may ask you to spend your evenings with me now and then without any farther invitation. If your papa will come with you, so much the better. The doctor will always be pleased to see him.

'By the way, I hear you are a very sweet singer, and I must beg you to bring your music.—Very faithfully yours,

'LETITIA OLLIVANT.'

'Then the doctor must have praised my singing,' thought Flora, wonderingly; 'and he hardly said a civil word about it to my face.

Only looked at me with those dark solemn eyes of his. So different from Mr. Leyburne.'

Mr. Leyburne had been led on to confess to a tenor voice, and there had been evenings devoted to 'La ci darem la mano' and 'Sull' aria.'

'We'll go to Wigmore-street this evening,' said Mr. Chamney, when he had read Mrs. Ollivant's note.

'Yes, papa; but suppose Mr. Leyburne should call?'

'We can't help that, Baby. I'm always glad to see him when he likes to drop in; but we can't be at home every night.'

'No, papa,' rather regretfully; 'but we were getting on so nicely with "La ci."'

'There'll be plenty of time for "La ci." You see, Flora, I feel as if the doctor ought to be told about our new acquaintance.'

'But what can it matter to him, papa?'

'Why, in the first place he is my oldest friend, and in the second place I look upon him almost as your guardian.'

'My guardian, papa!' with an alarmed look. 'What can I want with a guardian when I have you?'

'While you have me,—no, dear. Only—only people die, you know—'

'Papa, papa,' flying to his breast, and clinging to him passionately, 'how can you say such dreadful things?'

'A fact in natural history, Baby. A universal epidemic. We must all take it, sooner or later. Don't be frightened, pet. I don't mean to say that I am going off the hooks yet awhile. But I made my will the other day—a necessary act in every man's life, you know, darling—and I put Ollivant in as your guardian and trustee. There isn't any one you'd like better, is there, Flo?'

'I shouldn't like any one. I don't want a guardian or a trustee; I only want you.'

'And you shall have me, darling, as long as God pleases. May it be long, dear, for both our sakes!'

Flora echoed the prayer faintly, choked by sobs.

Mrs. Ollivant received them in her prim drawing-room, where not an object was disarranged from one week's end to another; the crimson tabinet-covered chairs—bought a great bargain by the country practitioner at a local sale—with their backs always glued to the wall; the tables with the same blotting-books and envelope-cases, scent-bottles and albums, which Cuthbert remembered in his earliest boyhood, adorning the chief apartment at Long Sutton; the mantelpiece ornaments of the same era; a grim-looking black-and-gilt clock in the sham-Greek fashion of the French Consulate; a pair of black-and-gilt candelabra sustained by sphinxes; some cups and saucers of Oriental ware; the looking-glass over the chimney framed

in black-and-gilt, corresponding with an oval mirror at the other end of the room; a pair of attenuated console-tables between the long narrow windows, surmounted by meagre strips of looking-glass, and adorned with more cups and saucers. The carpet was an ancient Brussels, of a vegetable or floral design, which had once presented the various colouring seen in mixed pickles, but was now faded to the palest of drabs, and yellowest of greens, and dingiest of browns. Altogether the room had a meagre and faded aspect; but Mrs. Ollivant thought it beautiful, and suffered not a speck of dust to rest upon the shining surfaces of tables and chair-backs.

She was sitting at her work-table, reading by the light of a shaded lamp, when her visitors were announced, alone. An hour's talk after dinner was the most her son could afford her, and the hour having expired, he had withdrawn to his study.

'Light the candles, James,' she said to the butler, 'and tell your master Mr. and Miss Chamney are here. I doubt if any other name would tempt him away from his books,' she said graciously.

The man lighted a pair of wax-candles in the Egyptian candelabra, which faintly illumined the region of the mantelpiece, and were reflected feebly in the dark depths of the looking-glass.

The dimly-lighted room seemed dreary to Flora, even after the barrenness of the Fitzroy-square drawing-rooms. Life there was a kind of bivouac, which was not without its charm. But here every object told of days gone by; of people who had long been dead; hopes that had never known fruition; dreams that had been dreamed in vain; the unspeakable melancholy that belongs to commonplace objects that have grown old.

Mrs. Ollivant, like her surroundings, had the air of belonging to an age gone by. She wore her hair and her dress in the same fashion that had obtained at Long Sutton seven-and-thirty years ago. Her dark hair was half-hidden by the Mechlin-lace lappets which had been one of her wedding presents, and fastened with a tortoiseshell comb that had been her mother's. So had the amethyst brooch which united her lace collar. Her iron-gray silk gown was made as scantily and as plainly as Miss Skipton, the chief dressmaker of Long Sutton, had made her dresses when she married. She had changed nothing—the hand of Time had even respected the calm thoughtful face, and had scarcely marked the progress of the quiet years by a wrinkle. Passion had ploughed no lines there, rancour had left no ugly imprint. It would have been hard to imagine a face which indicated a more tranquil existence, a serener soul. And yet there was an indefinable melancholy in the countenance, as of a woman who had only half lived, whose life had been rather like the winter sleep of hibernating animals than the ardent changeful existence of warm-blooded mankind.

She brightened, in her own calm way, at sight of Flora, held

out her arms, to which the girl came half shyly, and kissed her with a more maternal kiss than Miss Mayduke.

'So good of you, Miss Chamney—'

'Flora, if you please, dear Mrs. Ollivant.'

'Flora, of course. So good of you, Flora, to remember an old woman.'

'I have not so many friends that I could forget you; and if I had ever so many, I'm sure I shouldn't. But we've made a new one, and papa is going to tell you all about him.'

'A new friend!'

'A new friend!' echoed a voice by the door. They turned and saw Dr. Ollivant standing there with a serious attentive face. He came slowly into the room, like a man who was half worn out by the day's work, and shook hands with his visitors—Flora first, with a brief but keen scrutiny of the eager blushing face, and then with her father.

'And where may you have picked up your new friend, Chamney?' he asked, dropping into his favourite chair, while Flora, at Mrs. Ollivant's entreaty, took off a coquettish little hat and a sealskin jacket.

'Where did I pick him up? You may well say that. It was a regular case of picking up. I think I told you the other night that I am interested in shipping; only to the extent of a few loose thousands, but still interested.' And then he went on to tell his story, at which Dr. Ollivant looked unutterably grave, as if listening to the confession of a felony, and speculating how he could assist his friend to escape penal servitude.

Flora watched him with the deepest mortification. He did not show one ray of enthusiasm; he did not attempt to congratulate them upon the acquisition of this treasure, a young painter with a charming tenor voice and the most good-natured readiness to instruct her in the art of correct drawing.

'If you ask my candid opinion, Chamney,' said the doctor at last, with that brooding face of his still turned to the fire, and not to his friend, 'my opinion is that you have done a very foolish thing.'

'Eh?'

'A most inconsiderate thing. You admit a young man to a position of intimacy. You open your doors to him, and make him, as it were, a member of your own family, simply upon the strength of his having had a particular man for his uncle, without a single inquiry as to his character, or the remotest knowledge of his antecedents. What is this Mr.—Leyburne, I think you said, the better for being the nephew of a certain John Ferguson, a man who drank himself to death in the wilds of Australia?'

'I owe John Ferguson every penny I possess,' muttered Chamney.

'Perhaps. And I daresay he owed it to you that he didn't lose or

squander every penny he possessed. At any rate I cannot admit that this Leyburne has any lien on your gratitude. And if you take my advice, having let a scamp into your house in an evil hour, you will take the earliest opportunity of kicking him out of it. Of course I mean in a metaphorical sense.'

'I should hope so,' said Flora, half crying. She had hardly ever felt so disappointed. It seemed so hard to find such a want of sympathy and friendliness in their oldest friend. 'Mr. Leyburne is not at all the kind of young man to submit to be kicked, even by papa. And as for his being a scamp, it is very cruel and unjust of you to say such a thing, Dr. Ollivant, about a person you don't know. I'm sure if you were to see his studio you'd think very differently; everything so neat and orderly and, if one may say so, gentlemanlike; and casts in the most difficult attitudes, beautifully copied in chalk. He showed us the copies, didn't he, papa?'

Mr. Chamney nodded. He had taken his lecture meekly enough. Had not little Ollivant been accustomed to lecture him two-and-twenty years ago, upon the subject of his inaptitude for the study of Virgil, and his sluggishness of intellect with regard to hyperbolas and parabolas?

Dr. Ollivant looked at Flora with a curiously contemplative gaze, half scornful, as of a foolish child, half interested, as in a rather amusing young woman.

'Very well, let it be so,' he said. 'We will suppose the young man to be perfection.'

'He sings beautifully,' murmured Flora.

'We will admit him to be an acquisition. Don't be alarmed, mother, Miss Chamney and I are not going to quarrel. You'll sing my mother some of those old ballads, by and by, won't you, Miss Chamney?'

'Call me Flora, please,' she said, pacified by his half-apology. 'No one calls me Miss Chamney.'

'Not even Mr. Leyburne?'

'O, yes, he, of course. But he is a young man.'

'That makes a difference, I suppose. Then I shall call you Flora; or, if you are angry with me, as you were just now, perhaps I may call you Baby, like papa.'

'No, please, I can't allow that; nobody but papa must call me a foolish name.'

The doctor's factotum now appeared with the tea-tray, and at the doctor's bidding lighted more candles on the old-fashioned cabinet piano. Mrs. Ollivant made tea with the presentation urn and teapot that testified to her husband's skill in restoring health to the sickly inhabitants of Long Sutton,—made tea in the homely old English fashion, and was gratified when told her tea was good.

After tea Flora consented to sing, but not quite with her usual

willingness. She had not forgotten the doctor's unkindness about her painter—her painter—the first genius she had ever known, the first human creature she had ever heard talk familiarly of Titian and Rubens and Reynolds, as if he had painted side by side with them. Nor did the doctor's grave dark eyes, fixed on her so often with a calm scrutiny, inspire such confidence as on his visit to Fitzroy-square. Then she had liked him, and trusted him, and been ready to open her guileless heart to him as her father's friend. To-night she looked at him with a new feeling, almost akin to horror, thinking that if God took away her father this man would only stand between her and the desolate outer world. This man would be her legal defender: perhaps her tyrant.

She had the vaguest notions of a guardian's power, what he could or could not do. But it seemed to her that his power must be very great. He was, as it were, a father by law—and would have all a father's authority, with none of a father's love.

And then that bare suggestion that her father might die, that an awful severance might end their happy union, had come upon her spirit like a sudden blast from the frozen north. She was half heart-broken as she sat down to sing her little collection of old ballads, and the voice with which she began the 'Land of the Leal' was even more plaintive than its wont.

O that she too might feel herself drifting gently away to that better land, so that when her father's time came there might be no parting; that she who loved him so dearly might never be left in the barren world without him!

Mrs. Ollivant praised her voice, but wondered she should choose such sorrowful songs—she had sung her saddest that night. She was very quiet all the evening, sitting by the fireside listening to her father and the doctor. Mrs. Ollivant's little attempts to draw her out failed altogether. She had a new sense of unhappiness since that brief conversation with her father, and felt as if she could never be joyous again.

Mark Chamney talked about Australia, his favourite topic, and Dr. Ollivant listened with his quietly attentive manner, saying little more than was necessary to keep his friend in full swing. Later he asked some questions about Mr. Chamney's plans for the future.

'You don't mean to waste all your life in that old house you have taken, I suppose?' he said. 'It's very well for a professional man like me to live mewed-up in a London house all the year round; but I've always considered that a man is only half alive who lives always in the same place. You'll travel, I suppose, when the winter is over, and show your daughter something of the world—something more than she could find out from her maps and geographies at school.'

'I should like it well enough,' answered the other thoughtfully;

'only you know I'm a kind of patient of yours. Do you think I'm strong enough for that sort of work?'

Flora watched the doctor's face breathlessly at this point. But that calm visage told her nothing, or only that Cuthbert Ollivant was by nature serious and thoughtful, not a man to speak lightly or be lightly moved from any purpose of his own.

'Not to mount Mont Blanc, or the Jungfrau, perhaps,' he said with his quiet smile—that reassuring smile which had so often given birth to vain hopes in the breasts of those that beheld it. But then hope is the best medicine for a patient, the most potent stimulus for a nurse; and a doctor who was not hopeful would rarely cure.

'You're not strong enough to go to work in the same wild way you would have done twenty years ago,' he went on; 'but I believe change of scene and easy-going travelling—travelling is made uncommonly easy nowadays—would do you a world of good, as well as afford pleasure to Miss Chamney'—he could not quite bring himself to call her by her pretty Christian name yet awhile—'who must inevitably suffer if you keep her shut-up in Fitzroy-square much longer.'

'But I am not shut up,' the girl answered eagerly; 'we go for nice walks—don't we, papa?—in the other squares, and sometimes in Regent's Park. I am quite happy in London. But do you really think travelling would do papa good, Dr. Ollivant?'

'I do, most decidedly.'

'If so, let us travel at once. I am ready to start to-morrow.'

'I should recommend waiting for fine weather.'

'Then we will wait for fine weather. We will do whatever is best for papa. But he is not ill, is he, Dr. Ollivant?'

'Ill!' exclaimed Mark Chamney; 'why, what could put such a notion into this foolish Baby's head?' A timely reply, which saved Dr. Ollivant the embarrassment of being obliged to answer with one of his professional circumlocutions. He felt as if he could hardly endure to speak anything less than the truth to this girl, even at the risk of breaking her heart. 'Will you dine with us to-morrow night, Ollivant, and see what kind of a fellow our new friend is?' Mr. Chamney said by and by, when Flora was putting on her hat.

'Certainly. Miss Chamney's enthusiasm has awakened my curiosity. I should like to behold this paragon.'

Mrs. Ollivant gave a little sarcastic laugh, like an echo of her son's scornful tone. His opinions were her opinion. For him to dislike or disapprove was enough for her. That slow solitary life at Long Sutton had given her only this one creature to love and admire. From the hour of his birth she had worshipped him, had lived upon the thought of him during their severance, and existed only to please him now that they were reunited. He was her fetish.

'Come now, Mrs. Ollivant,' said Mark in his hearty way, un-

mindful of that ironical laugh; 'you'll come with your son, won't you? Flora, beg of Mrs. Ollivant to come.'

But Flora could not forgive that disparaging laugh, and said nothing. Mrs. Ollivant excused herself on the ground of never going anywhere—indeed, her son had never made for himself friends, at whose festive gatherings she might have been a guest. He had lived his own life, which was a solitary and sequestered life, and she had lived only for him.

'My son will be with you,' she said, 'and he will be able to form an opinion of your new acquaintance. He is an acute judge of character.' Her tone implied that the doctor was going to sit upon Walter Leyburne in the combined character of judge and jury.

'Papa,' said Flora, while they were going home in the cab, 'I begin positively to dislike your Ollivants.'

'No, Baby,' cried Mr. Chamney alarmed, 'for God's sake don't say that. Such worthy people; such straightforward, conscientious people—and the only friends I have in the world.'

'Except Mr. Leyburne, papa.'

'My darling, we mustn't count Mr. Leyburne. You're so impetuous, Flora; and I begin to feel I have done wrong in asking him to my house—'

'Only since that horrid doctor has talked you into thinking so, papa.'

'My dearest child, you must not say such things. There isn't a better fellow in the world than Ollivant.'

'But, papa, it's more than twenty years ago since you saw anything of him; time enough for a man to develop into a murderer. He might be very well as a schoolboy, but I'm sure he's odious as a man.'

'Flora, this is shameful!' exclaimed Mr. Chamney, getting angry. 'I insist upon your speaking with proper respect of Dr. Ollivant. I tell you again, he is my only friend. A man who lives the lonely life I lived for twenty years has no chance of making many friendships; and I rely on his protection for you when I am gone. There, there, don't cry. What a foolish girl you are! I am only talking of future possibilities.'

'If it were possible that I could lose you and be thrown upon the mercy of that man, I think I should throw myself out of the cab this moment,' said the undisciplined Flora, sobbing.

Chapter V.

'Is it thy will, thy image should keep open
My heavy eyelids to the weary night?
Dost thou desire my slumbers should be broken,
While shadows, like to thee, do mock my sight?'

The undisciplined Flora relented a little next day, when the doctor came to dinner and deported himself with a peculiar gracious-

ness towards Walter Leyburne. There had been time for Cuthbert Ollivant to think in the interval; and he had suffered no little shame and self-scorn at the thought of his petty burst of temper with reference to the unknown painter.

'If I am to be his daughter's guardian some day—and God only knows how soon the day may come—I have some right to interfere, so far as to prevent that good-natured simpleton bringing dangerous people into his house; a painter, too; and a Bohemian, no doubt. And that silly girl is evidently in love with him already. But it was foolish of me to lose my temper about it.'

Very foolish, no doubt; and Cuthbert Ollivant was not a man prone to foolishness. He wondered at his own impetuosity, and determined to make up for his folly by extra civility to the obnoxious painter, by a calm and dispassionate consideration of the entire subject.

'A good-looking young man, with sixty thousand pounds, bound to Chamney by the associations of the past, and met with by the merest hazard in the city of London. It seems like a story-book. And the natural conclusion of the story would be a marriage between the painter and Flora Chamney. I wonder whether it will end that way. I fancy that is what Chamney has in his head; and he wants me to approve.'

He was walking up and down his consulting-room at the close of his day's labour, meditating upon this subject, as he had meditated many times during his daily round.

'After all, it would be the best thing that could happen for me. If she marries in her father's lifetime, she will want no guardian except her husband. And what should I do with a pretty girl for my ward? It's all very well to say my mother would take the care of her, and the management of her, off my hands. I should be responsible for her welfare all the same. And if she took it into her head to marry a scamp then, it would be much worse than her marrying a scamp now.'

A quiet contemplation of the subject in this light was calculated to make Dr. Ollivant well disposed towards Mr. Leyburne; yet he had no friendly feeling for that person as he walked from Wimpole-street to Fitzroy-square. It was a calm clear evening, and even London in November was not utterly odious.

He found the subject of his thoughts standing by the drawing-room fire talking to Flora—talking as if they had been first-cousins, allied by a lifetime of recollections and associations. Walter Leyburne's frank fair face was turned to him with a friendly smile in the lamplight, as Mr. Chamney introduced the two men; and the doctor was compelled to confess to himself that the face was pleasant, and even handsome. But, then, how many a scamp has a pleasant handsome face! It is almost an attribute of scamphood. A scamp with sixty thousand pounds, however, is a less common character.

Perhaps something in the young man's cordial easy manner pleased Dr. Ollivant in spite of his prejudices; perhaps he had schooled himself by an effort to seem friendly. In any case, he did make himself agreeable to Mr. Leyburne, and regained Flora's good opinion. He saw the change in her, and divined its meaning.

'To win her good-will, I have only to be civil to this fellow,' he said to himself. 'A poor compliment to me, as an individual.'

The little dinner was the gayest they had yet had in Fitzroy-square. Dr. Ollivant would not allow Mr. Leyburne to have the talk all to himself. He talked of every subject that was started, and talked well—with that tone of calm superiority which superior age and superior learning impart—spoke of art even, showing himself master of all the critic's technicalities.

'I did not know you cared about pictures,' said Flora, looking at him as if she beheld him suddenly in a new light, with some touch of wonder too, as if he were not the kind of man she could have supposed capable of appreciating pictures, or music, or flowers, or any of the more delicate charms of life.

'Yes,' he said, in his quiet way, 'I do like—good pictures. There is about one in every year's exhibition that I should care to possess.'

'What a pity for all the other fellows!' said Walter, piqued by the conviction that the doctor would not like *his* pictures.

'I didn't see any pictures in Wimpole-street,' said Mr. Chamney.

'No; the Wimpole-street furniture is my mother's, just as it came from Long Sutton—ugly, but familiar. It was hard enough to root her out of the Devonshire soil. I was obliged to bring away a little earth about the roots. In short, the old chairs and tables do well enough for me. I have not gone in for the refinements of life.'

'Which means that you are a confirmed old bachelor, I suppose?' said Chamney, with his good-natured laugh.

'I suppose so. I believe it is an understood thing that a man who doesn't marry before he's thirty is a confirmed bachelor. And yet there are instances of passion after that age, or history lies strangely.'

'Mark Antony, for example,' cried Walter, with a keen recollection of that useful personage to the art-world, Cleopatra.

The dinner was altogether agreeable. Dr. Ollivant appeared in a new light—not the grave quiet physician, with dark contemplative eyes and a leaning to silence, but a man of many words—words that had a colour and sparkle about them, like finely-cut gems—enthusiastic, eloquent even. And above all, he was gracious to Walter Leyburne. Flora was subjugated; wondered that there could be such a clever man in the world, as it were unknown and unappreciated; for she reckoned it as nothing that a man should have secured a fair practice, and a name in his profession, at five-

and-thirty. There was a latent bitterness, a minor strain faintly audible in the doctor's most brilliant talk; a vague sadness that touched the tender girl-nature. She was inclined to pity him a little, as a man who had grown old in the dismal drudgery of a learned profession, and lived a lonely joyless life in a house that had a dreary look, despite its well-ordered comfort.

She glanced from the doctor to Youth and Hope incarnate, in the person of Walter Leyburne; a creature all smiles and brightness, whose nature seemed brimming over with joy, like a glass of sparkling wine in which a thousand tiny bubbles come leaping up to the surface, as if they would say, 'We are the emblems of all earthborn joys; see how soon we vanish!'

Yes; that contrast between the slave of science and the disciple of art touched her; so she spoke to the doctor in her kindest tones, out of pure pity.

The three gentlemen went up to the drawing-room with Flora directly after dinner, and she had Dr. Ollivant on her hands while she poured out the tea, Mr. Chamney and the painter having planted themselves on the hearth-rug to fight out a political battle. Mr. Leyburne was a Radical, who derived his principles from Shelley and Leigh Hunt, and was somewhat astonished to find his pet theories bear no better blossom than broken park-pailings and trade-unionism; Mr. Chamney was a Conservative, on the ground of having money in the Funds.

'No man with an interest in the government securities of his country has a right to be a Radical,' he said. 'The man who has anything to keep is bound to be a Conservative. I was a thorough-paced "rad" when I worked my way out to Melbourne; but the day I began to save money was the day on which I went over to the opposition. Don't talk to me of the Revolt of Islam. What I see around us, sir, is the revolt of the tailors, the tinkers, the bakers, the candlestick-makers—a revolt whose inevitable result is the impoverishment of the well-to-do classes.'

While they were arguing this thesis, Dr. Ollivant was making his peace with Flora. A pleasant business it seemed to him, that business of reconciliation—and so new. To sit by the lamplit table and watch the fair hands moving noiselessly among the teacups, the sweet face bent a little in womanly solicitude, the soft eyes looking up at him half-shyly, half-confidingly, now and then, as his words made some special appeal to her attention. It was the newest thing that life could offer him; as strange as if he had found himself emperor of half the world.

'You were very angry with me last night, I'm afraid?' he said, with a smile that was rather provoking, Flora thought, as if he remembered her indignation with some sense of amusement, as at the anger of a petted child.

'I thought you unkind and unjust,' she answered.

'Because I ventured to express a doubt of your paragon—not having seen him, remember, and being therefore unaffected by the magic of his numerous graces.'

'That sounds as if you were still sneering at him. But now you have seen him, I hope you think a little better of him.'

'I think him a very agreeable young man, after the pattern of numerous other young men. But I am not even yet reconciled to his introduction here—to the privileged position which he occupies—while your father knows so little about him.'

'We know that he is the nephew of papa's old partner.'

'I cannot recognise that as a certificate of character. George Barnwell was a nephew. However, I will say no more, since you like him so much.'

'I like him because he is so kind to me,' replied Flora, blushing a little, but still answering with her accustomed frankness. 'He is teaching me to draw correctly, and he sings—delightfully.'

She would have used a stronger word—divinely—but checked herself, in fear of Dr. Ollivant's ridicule.

'What! he sings, does he? It seems he has all the gifts.' This was said with a regretful sigh, that moved Flora again to pity.

'He is not a clever doctor like you,' she said, eager to console; 'he cannot bring hope and healing to the sick and sorrowful, nor can he talk like you. I thought he was the best talker in the world, till to-night.'

The doctor smiled his slow thoughtful smile. Was it possible that his deeper thought and wider knowledge had impressed even this shallow frivolous girl; that she had discovered in him at least something which her new favourite lacked?

Not much longer did he enjoy the privilege of her sole attention. She was called away to sing presently.

'A duet, if you like, Mr. Leyburne,' she said. So the doctor heard the two fresh young voices blending harmoniously, each taking strength and sweetness from the other. If he had been a younger man—a man without fixed purposes and desires to fulfil in life—he might almost have envied Walter Leyburne his pleasant tenor voice, seeing what a strong link it made between these two. But in his character of a man who had dispensed with all small passions and petty vices, sustained always by the real business of his life, he could only listen and approve; or perhaps speculate vaguely upon what that hypothetical younger man might have felt.

Once seated at the piano, Flora did not leave it till she rose to bid her visitors good-night. The old music-books afforded inexhaustible amusement. 'Do you know this?' and 'Will you sing this?' the two said to each other again and again as they turned the leaves. Whereupon there were attempts which sometimes re-

sulted in success, sometimes in failure; efforts which were hardly intended for the amusement of the doctor or his host, who withdrew to the back drawing-room by and by, and sat by the fire talking. Dr. Ollivant faced the larger room, and could watch the two figures by the piano as he talked—and did watch them, as if his words had been little more than a running commentary on that group.

'Well,' said Mark Chamney, 'what do you think of him?'

'What can I think of him after so short an acquaintance, except that he is good-looking enough, and agreeable enough, and, I should think, conceited enough?' replied the doctor, with his dark watchful eyes upon the figure by the piano.

'There you are wrong. He has no conceit; on the contrary, he has a deprecating way of talking about himself and his own ambition which is very winning.'

'Only a novel form of conceit. The man who runs himself down is always a vain man. He is so assured of his own transcendent merits, that, out of mere condescension and good-nature, to let himself down to the level of the ruck, as it were, he pretends to think lightly of himself. I have seen that kind of conceit in my own profession. And then you admit him to be ambitious; *ergo*, he believes in himself.'

'His chances of success would be small if he didn't.'

'And yet, I suppose, he is a sorry dauber?'

'No, indeed. I don't pretend to be a judge of such matters. A picture to me is a picture, so long as there's plenty of colour about it. His struck me as rather bright and lively.'

'Bright and lively!' said the doctor, with a shrug. 'Yes, I know the kind of picture; the sort of thing that would make a good sign for an oil and colour shop. However, the young man is well enough in the abstract, Chamney, and I really don't want to quarrel with you about him. Only, to my mind, he is out of place in this house.'

'How out of place?'

'Your daughter is young and pretty—rather romantic, I fancy. He is good-looking and adventurous. Have you never speculated upon the possibility of their falling in love with each other?'

'The very thing I have speculated upon; a thing I look upon as almost inevitable.'

'O!' said the doctor gravely, with a curious little droop of his flexible lower lip. 'In that case I had better withdraw my objections.'

'On the contrary, you had better give me a friend's advice with a friend's candour.'

'And with the usual risk of giving mortal offence by my friendly truthfulness.'

'Now, look here, Ollivant,' said Mr. Chamney, coming closer to the doctor. 'Of course I know that you're—well, say diabolically

clever—and that it's only natural for you to crow over me now as you used to crow over me when we were schoolboys, while I was fool enough to like you in spite of the crowing. But this business is one that touches my daughter, and in anything that concerns her interest I protest against being crowed over. You must give me your advice honestly, without chopping logic, as between man and man.'

'As between man and man!' repeated the doctor with a musing air. 'I never quite caught the meaning of that phrase, though it always seems to stand for a good deal. Upon my word, Chamney, it appears to me that there is no room here for advice. You have set your heart on the match already; and the young lady,' with his eyes always turned towards the piano, 'seems on the high-road to the same way of thinking.'

'Do you see any reason for supposing he would not make her a good husband?' asked Chamney, coming straight to the point. 'He has sixty thousand pounds. I can give my girl about half as much; and he is a thoroughly good fellow.'

'An opinion you have arrived at after a fortnight's acquaintance,' said the doctor.

'Come, Chamney, I told you just now I want advice, not crowing.'

'What put this idea into your head?'

'Can you ask me that when you know my uncertain lease of life? What more natural than that I should want to see my darling married before I die; that I should like to know the man to whose keeping all her future life is to be given—all the long years which I shall not see; the years in which she will ripen into womanhood, and have children to love and honour her? I should like to know the father of her children, though I may never live to see them.'

'Do you think a fortnight's knowledge is enough?'

'Am I a fool? No, it is only an idea in embryo that I have trusted to you. I am not going to mortgage my darling's future until I can see pretty clearly ahead. But I thought it only right to let you into the secret of my fancy; to let you see the young man, and form your own judgment of his character.'

'I am not so keen a judge as to discover a man's worth or worthlessness in a single evening. I should think your protégé somewhat shallow and frivolous; but then that does not matter much to a woman, who is apt to be shallow and frivolous herself.'

'That's an old bachelor's notion of women. Then you reserve your opinion, I suppose?'

'I reserve my opinion until I have seen a little more of your paragon.'

Chapter VI.

'The Devil and
This fellow are so near, 'tis not yet known
Which is the evilier angel.'

'Rather the ground that's deep enough for graves,
Rather the stream that's strong enough for waves,
Than the loose sandy drift,
Whose shifting surface cherishes no seed
Either of any flower or any weed,
Which ever way it shift.'

Within a half-mile radius of Fitzroy-square there are streets which, although perhaps not absolutely disreputable—and it is not easy to know in London whether a street is disreputable or not—have a certain air of squalor, dispiriting to the mind of the wandering pedestrian or the cab-driven voyager who may happen to pass through them. Residents are doubtless unconscious of that depressing influence. 'Be it ever so humble,' says the song, 'there's no place like home;' and the scene which, to the passer-by, is suggestive of low spirits may, to the inhabitant of the spot, breathe only of shrimps and watercresses and the muffin-bell, and all the tender associations of the domestic hearth.

Voysey-street was a street of this order; a broadish street, and with ample room and verge enough in the way of pavement, but purblind at one end, which only held communion with the outer world by a narrow isthmus of alley, where noisy children rioted all day long, and drunken men and women bawled by night, and which possessed for its chief attractions an eel-pie house, and a pork-butcher popularly supposed, in the immediate neighbourhood, to purvey the finest pork in London. To eat spare-rib or griskin from Billet's was to enjoy a feast which Roman emperors might have envied, in the opinion of Voysey-street and Cave-square round the corner.

There was a court dressmaker in Voysey-street; a young person who exhibited stale fashion-plates and pink-tissue models of elaborate costumes in her window, and who made bonnets at half-a-crown, and dresses at four-and-sixpence, for the surrounding gentry, so that her connection with the Court must have been wholly a matter of imagination and door-plate. There was a chandler's shop at each end, and another in the middle. Indeed, the Voysey-streeters seemed to live almost entirely upon chandlery, and to be curiously independent of butchers' meat. There was a small shop for fish, of the dried and salted order, with occasionally a tub of bulky oysters, or a few limp-looking plaice, in the very hot weather, to be had a bargain. There was a newsvendor, who vended a variety of other articles, in the way of tobacco, small fancy goods, brandy-balls and jumbles, fireworks in the festive season of November, and

walking-sticks all the year round, and who retailed a good deal of information respecting the immediate neighbourhood gratis across his own counter. These, with one more, a ladies' wardrobe, were all the shops in Voysey-street; the rest of the houses were as private as any house could be in which several families abounding in small children inhabited the various floors, whose lodgers, with furniture and without furniture, seemed to change with all the changes of the moon, whose front parlours were sometimes small academies for the instruction of youth, miscellaneous as to sex and age, whose back parlours sometimes sank as low as mangling. Perhaps one of the shabbiest of the houses in this region of depression and decay was that whose parlour-windows exhibited the flabby stock-in-trade of a ladies' wardrobe. It is curious to observe the air of squalor and disreputability which pervades cast-off garments thus exposed for sale; as though the mere fact of repudiation debased the things, like a son or daughter turned out of doors. There is a hang-dog aspect about that sealskin jacket, which whispers of midnight wanderings and unholy lurkings at street-corners; an air half dejection, half indifference, marks that black-lace bonnet, with its garland of tumbled rosebuds and bent front. Very difficult is it to imagine fresh and fair girlhood in that crumpled pink tarlatane or waving that broken fan. And that plum-coloured satin, gorgeous in its decay—who could believe that it was ever the garb of respectable matronhood? There are wine splashes on the skirt that tell of nocturnal revels, mirth too wild for gladness. The chance pedestrian glances at the window and hurries by with a shudder. Those tawdry garments hanging limply behind the dingy windows look to him like ghosts of the unhallowed dead.

Not thus meanly, however, thought Mrs. Gurner, the proprietress of the ladies' wardrobe, of that avocation which she had chosen for the support of her declining years. To her mind it was a pursuit at once honourable and genteel. On the gentility she dwelt with peculiar fondness. There was no counter, she remarked, and there were no weights and scales; none of the paraphernalia of plebeian trades. Plebeian trades—chandlery, shellfish, sweetstuff, and the like—might be brisker; but they were inherently obnoxious to the mind of a bred-and-born lady, as compared with the exchange and barter of second-hand garments. That species of commerce was in a manner professional. You did not even ticket your goods, but speculated your price according to the appearance or disposition—as indicated by physiognomy and manner—of your customer. It was a matter, Mrs. Gurner observed, of private 'contact.'

Mrs. Gurner's years had been declining for a considerable time, or rather had declined to a certain point, and there abided stationary. She had been faded and elderly when she first came to Voysey-street, nineteen years ago. She was faded and elderly still. It was

believed in the neighbourhood that she had worn the same cap throughout that period—a structure of rusty black lace adorned with roses; but this was not strictly true. The substructure was possibly the same, but the flowers had bloomed and faded with the changing years; only never being new or clean, the change had not been noticeable.

'I suppose it's only natural that, having plenty of handsome clothes always at my command, I shouldn't care about 'em,' said Mrs. Gurner, in her low-spirited way; 'anyhow, I don't. I should scarcely take five shillings' value off that plum-coloured satin if I was to wear it a month. Threepennorth of benzine would bring it round again from any harm I should do it. But I don't feel the temptation. Give me my old black silk; I always feel the lady in it.'

A curious psychological fact this, tending to prove that an individual's inner consciousness may present to him an image widely different from that outward form which he wears before the eyes of his fellow-men. Mrs. Gurner, in the decomposed remains of a black-silk dress—a garment which was at once greasy, rusty, and of a dull greenish hue that suggested mouldiness, worn at the elbows, split under the arms, frayed at the cuffs, and ragged at the hem—may have felt a lady, but she certainly did not look one. But a black-silk gown in Voysey-street had a certain permanent value, independent of actual wear and tear; and as a man receiving the Order of the Bath writes himself K.C.B. or C.B. ever afterwards, so in Voysey-street a lady wearing black-silk raiment at once and for ever established her claim to gentility.

Mrs. Gurner, though she was given to speak of herself, in relation to rent and water-rate, as a lone female, was not positively alone in the world. Her son and her son's daughter shared her humble abode. The son pretended to do a good deal—he was a genius in his way, and esteemed himself, in a large measure, independent of the trammels that confine the footsteps of ordinary mankind—and succeeded in doing very little. He did, however, contribute to the expenses of the establishment in a spasmodic manner; or the establishment must inevitably have suffered that complete collapse with which it was periodically threatened by landlord and tax-gatherer. For it is not to be supposed that the profits arising out of the exchange and barter of ten pounds' worth of second-hand soft-goods could have paid for the shelter, food, and clothing of three full-grown persons.

Jarred's daughter helped her grandmother in the business and housework, waited on the lodgers, ran of errands, did whatever cleaning may have been done where everything seemed always dirty, and endured not a little reproof of a low-spirited kind, which the girl herself described as 'nagging,' from her elderly relative. The elderly relative 'took the lead,' as she called it, in the business, and

cooked the viands for the family table; a work of extreme care and nicety, for it is curious to observe that people whose food is of a limited or even fortuitous character, mysterious as the provender which the ravens brought to the prophet, are apt to be extremely particular about the cooking thereof. Jarred was as keen an epicure in his way as any *gourmet* at the clubs.

That apartment which, in a more conventional state of society, would have been called the drawing-room, but which in Voysey-street was always spoken of as the first-floor front, was held sacred to the uses of Mr. Jarred Gurner. It was the most important room in the house and the best letting, as Mrs. Gurner said, with her chronic sigh, and to relinquish it to Jarred was to relinquish a reliable source of income. But Jarred's avocations required a north light, and the first-floor front faced the north—nay, more, had a central window, which had been extended to the ceiling for the convenience of some artistic resident in days gone by, before Voysey-street had sunk below the artistic level.

Jarred was an artist, and the tall window suited him to a nicety. He was a professor of the art of doctoring pictures and of doctoring violins, and wonderful were his ways in both arts, but most especially in the latter, which is an intricate and mysterious process approaching conjuration; since, by the application of certain varnishes and a smoky chimney, Jarred could sometimes convert the most commonplace of fiddles into an Amati or a Guanerius. He conjured a little with the pictures, too, as well as with the fiddles, and could transmute the handiwork of any out-at-elbows dauber in his neighbourhood into a genuine Teniers or Oestade, a Rubens or Vandyke, to suit the turn of the market.

Half the pictures in Wardour-street had been through Jarred's hands. The simpering, bare-shouldered, flaxen-ringleted beauties of the Lely school,—he knew them to the turn of their little fingers, the pattern of their lace tuckers; had sat staring at them meditatively many a night as he smoked his black-muzzled pipe, and wafted the tobacco-clouds across their vapid smiling faces, while he calculated the odds on an outsider or reviewed the performances of an established favourite. Jarred had various strings to his bow. He did a little in the stock-jobbing way now and then—of course in the pettiest form—took shares in new joint-stock speculations and sold them again, or failed to take them up and defied the directors, since it would have been throwing good money after bad to set the mighty engines of law to work with a view to making Mr. Gurner keep his engagements. He had put his hand to almost everything, as he used to boast in his playful way, 'from pitch-and-toss to manslaughter.' He had even done a little in the private-detective line, and although a mere outsider, had been acknowledged by some of the master minds in that noble profession to be good at following up a trail.

He was a broad-shouldered, strongly-built man, with something of a gipsy look in his swarthy face and glittering black eyes—small eyes, but with an unusual brightness that made them striking. Perhaps his gipsy life had given that cast to his features; that reckless, dare-devil turn to eye and lip, and even the crisp wave of his coarse black hair. You could have expected to meet him on a country common, with gold rings in his ears and a hawker's box upon his back, seeking whom he might devour. There was something gipsyish in his way of living even in Voysey-street, and yet not social—a solitary Bohemian this, who liked best to take his meal by himself, at the snuggest corner of his hearth, in his one comfortable chair, and to sit alone and smoke and scheme afterwards. The women of his household were a bore to him. The wretched little room down-stairs, where they lived, and slept, and cooked, and ate,—the miserable make-believe parlour behind the shop, in which the bed by night vainly essayed to pass for a cheffonier by day,—was rarely honoured by his presence, and when his mother or his daughter came to his room, they knocked at the door in all humility before presuming to enter. Only when Jarred was in an especially good humour, when things had gone well with him in the City or in the betting-ring, when he had planted an Amati or a Rubens, did he deign to eat his supper with his kindred in the stuffy little chamber below stairs. Then his soul would expand over sprats or fried tripe, and he would tell them his schemes or impart his indignation against that destiny which had not provided him with unlimited capital.

'I could do anything with capital!' he would declare. 'Give me a thousand pounds for my fulcrum, and I would die the equal of Rothschild.'

His daughter used to sit with her elbows on the table, although severely admonished thereupon by her grandmother, who never forgot to be genteel, and gaze open-mouthed and open-eyed upon her father.

He had contrived to instil into her youthful mind the profoundest belief in his genius, even without taking any pains to effect that end; for his wild talk of his own talents, and the things he ought to have done and would yet do, when Fate should cease her opposition, was for the greater part mere soliloquy, or the letting-off of the superfluous steam which a lively imagination and an extra pint of sixpenny ale will engender in the human mind.

Louisa Garner believed implicitly in her father, and lived in a chronic state of anger against society at large for its neglect and ill-usage of him. It seemed a hard world in which such a man as Jarred Garner could not have place and power, carriages and horses, a fine house to live in, costly raiment, and the fat of the land for his daily provender. There must be some cog-wheel loose, some

endless web out of gear, in the machinery of a universe in which Jarred had to wear shabby boots and eat scanty dinners. This feeling, fostered by the father's wild talk, had grown with Louisa's growth, and now found expression in a lurking discontent which pervaded the girl's nature, and was even visible in her handsome young face; a delicate likeness of the father's, the eyes larger and softer of hue, the mouth smaller and more refined in form, but the same dark skin and wavy black hair, the same half-gipsy look, the same defiant pride in every lineament. As the beauty of fallen angels was the beauty of Louisa Gurner; a fairness in which even admiring eyes found something akin to the diabolical. Yet, as Mr. Gurner was wont to observe in moments of good-humour, 'Loo was not half a bad girl.' Neither selfishness nor vanity found a congenial soil in the flower-gardens of Voysey-street. Other vices might spring up there and thrive apace; but for these delicate flowers of evil there was but scanty nutriment. Louisa, having never known what it was to find her inclinations studied or her desires ministered to, had resigned herself, even before she turned up her back hair and lengthened the skirts of her shabby gowns with advancing womanhood, to take life as she found it. It was her lot to accept the offal as her share of the sacrifice, to sit in the most uncomfortable chair, sleep on the veriest edge of her grandmother's bed, get up the earliest in the house and go to bed the latest, run on errands in wet weather, wear her shoes long after they had ceased to be any particular use as a protection for her feet, eat the tail ends of mutton-chops and the gristly trimmings of the steak, and very often to find the guerdon of her daily sacrifice in a jobation from her father, larded with an oath or two, or an hour or so of intermittent nagging from her grandmother.

A hard life, and Loo knew it—knew, too, that she was handsomer than her neighbours, and sharper of intellect. Her glass—a sorry mirror for beauty, with the quicksilver worn off the back in blotches, like a skin disease—told her that there was more of life and colour in her face than in the common run of faces, all more or less pinched and pallid and aged by premature cares, that belonged to the young women of Voysey-street. Nor was she often in the streets for a quarter of an hour without hearing some outspoken compliment to her good looks. But this knowledge inspired no vanity. What was the use of good looks without fine dress and a carriage?

'I think I'd as lief be ugly,' she said to herself, 'or liefer, for then I shouldn't be bothered or insulted when I'm out on an errand.'

One solitary pleasure brightened this joyless life. When Jarred's temper had been sweetened by the prospering of some scheme, or the success of some experiment in the doctoring line, he would suffer his daughter to bring her needlework up to his room and sit

there while he smoked, or varnished, as the case might be. She had her favourite corner by the fire in winter—Jarred always kept a good fire, however pinched might be the handful of coals in the shrunken grate below—her favourite seat on the window-ledge in summer, half in the room and half out of it. But only too rare were those brief glimpses of bliss, for, as it has been already remarked, Jarred kept his womankind at a distance, and Louisa's evenings were usually spent in a depressing duologue with her grandmother, whose conversation was at best a prolonged monody upon one perpetual theme—the hardness of life for the race of Gurner.

On this wet winter's night, less than a week after the little dinner in Fitzroy-square, Louisa has been allowed to bring her work up to Jarred's room, a worsted sock of her father's which she cobbles laboriously. It is the only work she is ever seen to accomplish, and it seems, to the casual observer, always the same sock, the same yawning gulf sundering sole from heel, the same dilapidation at the toe; but she plods on mechanically, and makes no moan. Not that Louisa is fond of needlework. 'There never was such a poor hand as our Loo at her needle,' says Mrs. Gurner, when she holds forth upon her niece's imperfections. Loo has a passion for novel-reading and for music—will sit upon the ground or the fender, a slatternly crouching figure, for hours together, if only let alone so long, poring over a tattered romance, or will steal up to her father's room when he is abroad to pick out tunes, or accompany her snatches of song on the battered old piano that lurks—a convenient shelf for empty pewter pots, clay pipes, boots that want mending, and old newspapers—in one corner of the room. She is not voiceless, Loo, but has a powerful undisciplined contralto, which is the very opposite of Flora Chamney's clear carol. Nor is she quite as ignorant as the majority of young women in Voysey-street, though she has graduated only in the Voysey-street academies. She has managed to pick up some shreds and patches of education from her father—enough, at least, to teach her the sordid misery of her existence, and the bare fact that there is a higher kind of life somewhere beyond the regions of Voysey-street. She has learned to be angry with destiny for casting her lot in this back slum, and is in this respect unlike the aborigines, who talk as if Voysey-street were the world, and round the corner the edge of another universe which they have no desire to penetrate. There are dwellers in Voysey-street who hardly know what it is to turn that corner in all the days of their life. Their ambitions and desires are all bounded by Voysey-street, and the court where the celebrated pork-butcher turns his sausage-machine. If they grew rich—a contingency remote to the verge of impossibility—they would make no eager rush to Prince's-gate or Park-lane. They would only riot in the luxuries of Voysey-street;

sup continually upon tender pigling, wallow in the humbler varieties of shellfish; go to a theatre now and then, perhaps, or even take an eight-hour view of ocean; but only to come back with hearts more fondly turned to Voysey-street. This is the condition of mind proper to Voysey-street—simple as the soul of the Hawaian savage, whose breadfruit groves and coral-bound bays are all he knows of land or sea; but education had removed Louisa from this Arcadian simplicity, and to her vitiated mind Voysey-street was hateful.

She sat upon her favourite corner of the fender on this particular evening, sometimes darning assiduously, and sometimes stopping, with her sock-clad arm stretched lazily across her lap, to stare at the fire and meditate, a slovenly figure, with dark hair loose about its brow, clad in a worn stuff gown, whose original colour had been disguised by dirt until it had as much depth of tone as one of Jarred's sham Rembrandts.

A slatternly figure, but somewhat picturesque withal, needing but transference to a background of Spanish posada to be as fine a piece of colour as a picture by John Philip.

She wore a little scarlet handkerchief round her throat, which made a patch of brightness against that deeper tone, and her dark eyes reflected the firelight; a picturesque light, which brightened the pale olive skin, flickered on the full red lips, set firmly in a thoughtful mould wherein there was a shade of melancholy too much for youth, even in Voysey-street. Jarred—smoking his pipe in luxurious idleness, after a couple of hours' gluing and varnishing, which he called a hard day's work—was content that his only child should sit and stare at his fire, but was in no humour for talk, and was not going to put himself out of the way for her amusement.

'What's for supper?' he asked anon, pausing to refill his pipe.

'I think it's tripe, father.'

'Think! You oughtn't to think about a fact. It is or it isn't tripe. You can't think about it.'

'I beg your pardon, father,' the girl answered meekly; 'it is tripe. I fetched it myself.'

'Then I hope you fetched it double, with plenty of fat; that thin stuff your grandmother gives me sometimes is no better than stewed washleather. Hark! there's the street-door bell. Who can that be to-night?'

'Some one for grandmother, perhaps,' speculated the girl.

'Very likely.'

But Mr. Gurner bestirred himself nevertheless, put away a dissected violin in a convenient drawer, flung a cloth over an ancient-looking Holy Family born three weeks ago, and attaining premature age as in a hotbed or forcing-house; and having assured himself that his room was fit for the reception of a visitor, went back to his chair.

'See who it is, Loo,' he said.

But before the girl could stir, the question was answered by the approach of a familiar footstep, which came lightly and swiftly up the stair, while a tenor voice, at its fullest pitch, sang the opening bars of 'La mia letizia.'

'It's Mr. Leyburne, father.'

'Yes, and I haven't touched that Dutch interior of his,' said Jarred, with a glance towards a corner where three or four frameless canvases were piled against the wall.

It was Mr. Leyburne, resplendent in his velvet coat, and with a lighted cigar between his finger tips, who came into the room still singing, in the primo-tenore manner, all diminuendo and crescendo, and anon, having finished his final phrase, saluted the restorer with a familiar nod.

'Well, my revered renovator, have you been baptising a fiddle with the baptism of copal and mastich, or elaborating a Raffaelle? How do you do, Miss Gurner? You haven't touched that little bit I brought you, I suppose, Gurner?' with a rapid survey of the dimly-lighted room—Jarred had turned down the gas when he left off work. 'Rather a tidy little bit, I flatter myself, and, unless I'm vastly deceived, a genuine Jan Steen.'

'You wouldn't be likely to be deceived,' said Jarred, with his plausible gipsy smile. 'It isn't to be supposed you'd be taken in like some of our City customers—stockbroking gentlemen, who set up their villas at Tulse Hill and Clapham, with vineries and pineries, and so on, and want genuine Titians and Veroneses at five pound per square foot.'

'Well, no, I am a little better judge than your City swell, I hope. Still any fellow may be taken in. But I think there's something good in that Dutch bit. I got it of a dealer in Long Acre; had a couple of brand-new blue-and-green landscapes in the middle of his window, and the Jan Steen in a corner, poked away anyhow behind some jimcrack Dresden china. "What do you want for that little brown bit?" said I. "Seven pound ten," said he. "Give you five," said I. "Frame's worth the money," says he, which, by the bye, is the inevitable remark of a dealer if you offer him a price for his picture. "I'll give you five, and toss you for the difference," says I. Dealer wouldn't—wished him good-morning—changed his mind and would. Tossed him for the two ten, and won the toss. And I believe he was glad to get the fiver. Turn up your gas, Gurner, and let's have another look at it.'

Since his accession of fortune Mr. Leyburne had amused himself by turning collector in a small way, and had lined the walls of his lodgings with those treasures of art which he had amassed in the course of his peregrinations, and the greater number whereof he had intrusted to Jarred to clean and varnish. But he had not gone wildly to work, being a prudent young fellow enough in spite of his

light-hearted gaiety, and not one of those young men to whom being left a fortune means ultimate ruin. He found a good deal of spending in three or four hundred pounds, and his chief delight was derived from the picking up of various canvases in out-of-the-way corners, every one of which, in its brief span of novelty, he implicitly believed in as an original.

Jarred knew Mr. Leyburne's ways, and as every picture which passed through Jarred's hands was worth a matter of thirty shillings to him, it may be supposed that he prophesied smooth things about these works of art, and only threw in a doubt or a rough word here and there to prove his frankness and loyalty.

The gas was turned up to its fullest—a couple of strong flaring jets, unshaded by globe or chimney—and Mr. Gurner brought the little picture and placed it on a dilapidated easel exactly under the light, while Walter Leyburne and Loo put their heads close together to peer into it. The girl had been half brought up on pictures, as it were, and had a mechanical knowledge of the various masters—that a brown-faced Madonna was a Murillo; a pallid or bluish-complexioned saint or saintess likely to be a Guido, especially if with saucer-shaped upward-gazing eyes; that sheep were never painted by anybody but Ommeganek; that dark inscrutable pictures relieved by dabs of the palette knife here and there were Salvator Rosas; and so on, and so on, through the whole catalogue of art. The Jan Steen was the usual kind of thing—an old woman peeling vegetables, and another old woman looking at her; still life, a brass pipkin or two, a bottle and glass on the table, a half-open door with glimpse of inner room.

'To my mind,' said Walter, gazing at his picture with the fondness of a discoverer, as Cortez may have gazed at the Pacific or Columbus on the coast of America, 'there's no question about that. If I were hard up to-morrow, I shouldn't be afraid of offering that picture to the National-Gallery fellows. It's worth seven hundred and fifty pounds or it's worth nothing.'

'I shouldn't be surprised if it were,' said Jarred; and then they both went into the picture technically, and discussed its merits in minutest detail.

'It's the detail in these things that constitutes their charm, you see,' said Walter Leyburne; 'there's nothing beautiful in an old woman peeling onions *per se*.'

'No,' replied Jarred; 'if I were a millionaire like you, I shouldn't go in for old women—no, not if they were Jan Steens, or Ostades, or Brauwers. I'd hang my walls with beauty. There's that Guido, for instance—that's a picture you ought to have. I don't say so because I've got it to sell. I only wish I was rich enough to hang it up over that mantelpiece. I should sit and gaze at it by the hour together, and feel myself a better man for looking at it.'

Jarred said this with a glance at a large picture in the corner—a bluish-complexioned Magdalen gazing upward, from a background of purple sky, a masterpiece which he had vainly endeavoured to dispose of for a long time.

'I don't like large pictures, Gurner, and that Guido of yours is a duffer. Sell her to one of your City men by the square foot. She'd do uncommonly well between the windows in a Russell-square dining-room.'

Louisa withdrew to her corner by the fire, but not to her favourite seat on the fender, nor yet to the resumption of her darning. She sat watching the visitor as he paced up and down the room, smoking his cigar. There was little need for punctilio in this respect, since the atmosphere of Mr. Gurner's sanctum was at all times heavily charged with tobacco. Walter took the cigar from his lips every now and then to talk of art, in a wilder way than he had ever talked to his friends in Fitzroy-square, and with something less of modesty. Here indeed, in a chamber as it were sacred to the inner mysteries of art, his soul expanded, his countenance glowed with a noble fire, or a light which at least seemed noble to Louisa. He talked of himself, the things he meant to do in the future, measured himself boldly against the men who had succeeded, and declared his ability to match or surpass their work in the days to come. His wildest talk, however, seemed hardly the boastful utterance of a shallow vanity, but rather the bold defiance which a mind conscious of latent strength hurls in the teeth of destiny.

'They may snub me to-day, Gurner,' he said, 'but they shall change their note before I have done with them. Time and work, that's the motto for a man who wants to succeed, isn't it, old fellow?'

'Time and work,' repeated Jarred, to oblige his patron; but had he been asked for his own specific he would more likely have said, 'Time and varnish.'

The young man had been stung by the rejection of a small picture in one of the winter exhibitions. Even the consciousness of sixty thousand pounds in the Funds afforded no healing balm for that wound. It was only by a little self-assertion, by wild rhapsodies about honest work and future success, that he could find a balsam for his pain. He stopped suddenly, in the middle of a tirade, flung away the end of his cigar, and burst out laughing—at himself—in the frankest, pleasantest way possible.

'What a fool I am!' he exclaimed. 'What a consummate jackanapes you must think me, Miss Gurner! Only when a fellow gives one a slap in the face like that—a fellow one can't hit again, you see—the only way one can let the steam off is in talk. I daresay the fellows who rejected my picture—you've seen it, Gurner: "Werter's first Meeting with Charlotte"—were right enough. I shall think it a daub myself in a month's time, I've no doubt. I

generally do. But if there's any stuff in me, I won't have it trodden out of me, eh, Gurner?'

'I wouldn't give the snap of my finger for the opinion of all the hanging committees in London,' said Mr. Gurner, with supreme contempt. 'Prejudice and self-interest and convenience are the three judges that sit upon your pictures. That "Werter and Charlotte" was a gem—full of beauty and expression—the still life admirable—the modelling—well, there are not many young men in the Academy who could touch you there.'

'Don't say another word about it,' protested Walter, gratified notwithstanding. 'I am a selfish fool to come here and prose about myself and my disappointments. I hope you'll forgive me, Miss Gurner,' he added, with that natural graciousness which distinguished him when he spoke to women.

'I like to hear you talk about yourself,' the girl answered naïvely.

'Do you? That's very good. I fear I must be an insufferable bore. But then you're fond of pictures, I know, and can take an interest even in a struggling painter.'

'A struggling painter with a fortune at his back!' cried Jarred. 'That's what I call a rum start.'

'Now look here, Gurner. I'm not going to say I don't value money, for I do. I saw too much of poverty in my childhood—genteel poverty, you know, which is the worst of all—not to value good fortune. But I verily believe I could surrender all the money my uncle left me without a sigh, and begin life again a friendless lad in the streets of London, if I could paint like Etty or John Philip.'

He kept his word, and spoke of his own struggles no more that evening, though he stayed late, and talked of art in the abstract a good deal, while Loo sat by and listened, and forgot for a little while that life meant only Voysey-street. He was very far away from her life, this noble young painter; but such an evening as this was an oasis in the desert of her sordid existence, and she rejoiced in the cool verdure, and quenched her thirst at the limpid stream, and put away all thought of to-morrow's waking, when there would be nothing left but sand and barrenness.

There was a warmth and earnestness in Walter Leyburne's talk at all times which made him almost eloquent, and though, perhaps, there might be little positively new in his ideas, he was so different from the conventional young man who believes in nothing but boredom, that he at least appeared original. His hair, his eyes, his gestures, were all brightness and vivacity. He was a creature all life and variety—depressed one minute, elated the next, changing with a hundred shifting shades of feeling.

'Upon my word, Gurner, there is something extraordinary in this queer old room of yours. I always enjoy myself here; I suppose it's

because you let me talk so much. I came out to-night in a fit of despair—the black dog had me in his grip—and I have talked myself into good spirits. Or perhaps it is your influence, Miss Gurner,' with a friendly little look at poor Loo, a friendly glance that shot straight to her heart. Can a girl of eighteen exist without admiring something? and, after her father, Walter Leyburne was the sole object Louisa had to admire.

'I shouldn't think her influence went for much,' said Jarred moodily, 'considering that she sits there like a log, and never opens her mouth.'

The girl coloured high at the reproof.

'I suppose it's nature's fault if I'm stupid,' she said; 'so you needn't throw that in my teeth, father; and I don't see that it's my fault if I'm ignorant. I'd have been glad enough to learn if any one would have taken the trouble to teach me.'

This was true enough. She had besought her father, even with tears, to help her a little out of his vast storehouse of knowledge; but Jarred was too lazy even to impart the little he knew.

'I must protest against any insulting comparison between Miss Gurner and a log,' cried Walter eagerly. 'It is one thing to be silent—another thing to be a log. Now Miss Gurner is an admirable listener. I don't believe I should have rambled on half as long if it hadn't been for her delightful listening. She has a rapt look which inspires one—the lips a little parted, like a statue of Wonder. I wish you would let me—I wish Miss Gurner would let me paint her in one of my pictures. I have an idea for something better than Charlotte and Werter—a subject from Boccaccio, or something in that way. May I paint you, Miss Gurner?'

'She'll let you fast enough,' grumbled Jarred. 'She has nothing else to do. But I don't know whether her grandmother would like it. She's precious particular in her notions, is the old lady—can't forget that she was brought up to something better than buying and selling second-hand rags.'

It was as well to make a favour of the business, but Jarred, good easy man, had not the faintest objection. What if his girl—who was certainly a good deal better-looking than the ruck of girls—should captivate this young fellow, with his sixty thousand pounds? There'd be a stroke of luck. It was hardly likely, though. The girl's surroundings were too much against her, and the young men of the present day are so cool-headed and cool-hearted, so keenly alive to their own interests. No, it was scarcely within the range of possibility, thought Jarred, looking at his daughter's untidy hair, worn gown, and listless attitude. He was almost sorry he had not taken a little more pains with her. If a worn-out old violin, bought from a fiddler in an orchestra, can, by much labour and artful manipulation, be doctored into the semblance of a Straduarius, why should not a

girl like that have some capability in her that might be worth cultivation? But it was too late now; the chance was gone. There the girl was, unkempt, untaught, uncared for—a weed instead of a flower. No one but an idiot could imagine that she would have power to charm such a man as Walter Leyburne.

'Leave me to talk over the old lady,' said Walter. 'I have set my heart upon putting your daughter into my next picture.'

The girl brightened and blushed, but said nothing. This was a kind of praise, but, O, so different from the insulting compliments that had been muttered in her ear by wandering strangers as they passed her in the street.

The painter had been struck by a sudden notion that there was something original in the girl's face—something more than the mere pink-and-white prettiness which he could have for his model any day for eighteenpence an hour; something striking; something which—if he could only represent it faithfully—would make people stop before his canvas and exclaim, 'There's a curious picture!'

'By Jove, I've hit it!' cried the painter, in a sudden rapture. 'That for Boccaccio!' snapping his fingers contemptuously. 'I'll paint her as Lamia.'

'Lamia!' echoed Louisa wonderingly.

'Who may she be when she's at home?' asked Mr. Gurner.

'Keats's Lamia, the mysterious serpent-woman;' and then he spouted those wondrous lines:

'"She was a Gordian shape of dazzling hue,
Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and blue;
Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard,
Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson barr'd;
And full of silver moons, that, as she breathed,
Dissolved, or brighter shone, or interwreathed
Their lustres with the gloomier tapestries—
So rainbow-sided, touch'd with miseries,
She seem'd at once some penanced lady elf,
Some demon's mistress, or the demon's self."'

'I've no objection,' said Jarred, 'provided you paint her here. You can bring your traps, I suppose?'

'Of course,' answered Walter; 'I shouldn't dream of troubling Miss Gurner to come to my rooms;' with as deferential an air as if Miss Gurner had been the daughter of a duke, who could be no more moved from her particular sphere than the stars from their orbits.

So the business was settled, Walter pledging himself to vanquish any genteel prejudice on the part of Mrs. Gurner, and the young man began to pace the room, talking of his picture. It was to be a bishop's half-length; none of your cabinet pictures, all finish and namby-pambyism, but a life-size figure, the very woman as she

stood before him to-night, with those dark grand eyes, that ivory paleness of cheek and brow, those full crimson lips with their perfect curve, that loose shadowy hair—the very woman, only glorified by his art. By such a picture as this he might spring at one sudden bound into the arms of Fame. The world should find out that he had stuff in him—that he was not a mere amateur, a dabbler in art, serene in the security of a handsome income. No, Lamia should make him.

Lamia, or her representative, slipped from the room presently, unobserved, to 'see to' the supper, or, in other words, fetch the beer from a neighbouring tavern, lay the cloth, dish the potatoes, and submit to a good deal of mild nagging from her grandmother.

'I may toil and slave as much as I please,' wailed that victim of untoward fate, 'watching the tripe till my eyes ache, to keep it off the boil, but you can take your pleasure up-stairs, carrying-on with that young man, I make no doubt.'

'I don't know what you call carrying-on, grandma,' muttered the girl, in a low dull voice that might mean resignation or indifference; 'I haven't spoke half a dozen words to him, and I can't see much carrying-on in that.'

'If he hadn't been there, I suppose you'd have come down-stairs to help me with the tripe.'

'I didn't think there was much help wanted. I peeled the onions and fetched the milk before I went up.'

'You wouldn't have stayed up there quite so long for your father.'

'Yes, I would,' answered the girl boldly, making a little unnecessary clatter with the knives and forks she was arranging on the shrunken tablecloth, of more than doubtful purity; 'I always like to be with father. He may swear sometimes, but he doesn't nag.'

The matron refrained from any direct notice of this shot.

'Ah!' she said, with a plaintive sigh, 'the Gurners were always ungrateful. It's in the blood, I suppose. There's your father. I may toil and moil for him from before there's a shop open in the street till hours after the last of 'em has shut, and not get a thank you, or a civil word, if he's in one of his tempers. There's my daughter Mary went off to the other end of the world directly our family troubles came, and left her mother to face them alone.'

'Aunt Mary wanted to take you to Australia with her, grandma. I've heard you say so twenty times over,' expostulated Loo, putting down the mustard with an indignant dab.

'Wanted me to go!' wailed the dame; 'a pretty want, indeed, when she knew that going to Margate by water was a trial beyond my strength.'

'You might have got over a little sea-sickness, I should think, to get away from England, after—after what you've told me,' said Loo. 'I'm sure I'd have gone, and gladly, though I'd had to go through fire as well as water, if I'd happened to be born in those days.'

'*You!*' cried the elder lady contemptuously; '*you're* made of a finer clay than a Shrubson, I daresay.' Shrubson was Mrs. Gurner's maiden name.

'I've got my feelings,' answered Loo, setting down the bread with a bang; 'even the life we live can't quite stifle them. Hark, here comes father—and—Mr. Leyburne.'

She gave a hurried glance at the dim old looking-glass over the chimneypiece, and saw her angry face and tumbled hair with an angry feeling in her breast. Paint *her*—a creature like her—whose odious surroundings seemed to be reflected in her face? Yes, paint her, for some vile character, no doubt. The serpent-woman, he had said—something frightful, revolting. Her sharp white teeth clenched her under-lip angrily at the thought. And she had been fool enough, at first, to feel flattered by the idea that he could trouble himself to make a likeness of her. There was a little pause at the parlour door. Yes, Mr. Leyburne was coming in. She took a hurried survey of the room; so small, so crammed with furniture, so untidy; the too-obvious press-bedstead, a heap of her grandmother's garments huddled indiscriminately in a decrepit old arm-chair, of a fashion so lost in the gloom of ages, that Noah might have carried such an one into the ark for the accommodation of Mrs. Noah.

'Come in and sit down,' urged Jarred at the door. 'What's your hurry?'

The painter looked into the room doubtfully. It was not a nice room, but there was his Lamia, busy with a saucepan of potatoes. Should he go back to his own rooms and think-out his new picture with the aid of a solitary cigar, or should he stop and talk to Jarred Gurner while that versatile genius ate his supper? Jarred was an intelligent companion; there were always some stray grains of corn to be winnowed out of that chaff which formed the staple of his discourse.

'What's your hurry?' repeated Jarred. 'You young fellows are always going to the Albion for tripe suppers. Why can't you sit down and eat your supper with us? The old lady there is a first-rate hand at stewed tripe.'

Mr. Leyburne acknowledged a slight weakness for tripe, but tripe at the Albion—clean table-linen, spotless glass and china—was one thing; the same dish in this stuffy parlour might have a different savour. But then there was Lamia, and he had to conciliate the old lady. Moved by this last consideration, he took his place at the little round table, at which there was hardly room enough for four. But Loo did not require any supper.

'I'm not hungry, grandma,' she said, in her indifferent way; 'there's no use in my crowding the table.'

'The English of it is she doesn't like tripe,' said Jarred, with his mouth full; 'I never knew a woman that did. They haven't sense enough.'

Loo sat down in Mrs. Gurner's easy-chair—the antediluvian chair—after pushing its various contents into a corner. She sat and watched the little supper party, and wondered what Walter Leyburne thought of the room, and her grandmother, and their life altogether, and whether he was very much disgusted at being obliged to eat and drink amidst such surroundings. His manner gave no indication of such disgust. He drank the sixpenny ale, and laughed and talked with all his habitual light-heartedness, having by this time put away his disappointment at the rejection of his picture as a grief that was past and gone. That ideal picture which was to make him for ever renowned had assumed a new shape. Werter and his Charlotte might wander out into darkness and chaos, might turn their faces to the wall; Lamia should open the stubborn door of Fame's temple, that mystic portal which he had been storming for the last two years with the battering-ram of youthful energy.

Jarred, warmed by the cheque which Walter had just given him on account of the Jan Steen, was unusually brilliant. They discussed all the pictures of the year; gave each man his place, rather lower places than the public had given; pooh-poohed the critics; laughed at the mob which admires out of slavish imitation, as sheep follow the bell-wether; in short, they ran the whole gamut of that argument which is the chief consolation of unsuccessful men.

'You haven't been round here so often lately, Mr. Leyburne,' said Mrs. Gurner when the conversation flagged a little, as the men moved their chairs away from the table, and prepared for their after-supper smoke on each side of the narrow fireplace, Jarred next his daughter, who sat almost buried in the shadow of the bulky arm-chair; 'I began to think you'd forgot us.'

'Then you did me injustice, Mrs. Gurner,' answered the young man in his cheery way; 'I'm not in the habit of forgetting old friends, even for the sake of new ones. And I've made some new friends since I was here. Let me see, when was it?'

'A fortnight on Tuesday,' said Louisa, from the corner. 'I didn't know friends was made so quick.'

'Good, Miss Gurner! I see you can be bitter and aphoristic when you like. Well, say acquaintance—or—no, I think we must call these friends. The circumstances are exceptional.'

Jarred showed himself curious to learn the nature of these exceptional circumstances. Loo sat very still, curled up in her big chair, with her eyes shining out of the shadow.

Walter, inspired by sixpenny ale, gave full swing to his natural frankness and expansiveness, and told all that there was to be told about Mr. Chamney and his daughter. How Flora was the prettiest creature he had ever seen in his life; or, if not positively the prettiest, the most interesting, the most winning, the most lovable.

'If I were to put her in a picture, I don't suppose half a dozen

people would stop to look at it,' he said; 'for all that's brightest and best in her beauty would escape my pencil. There's something spiritual in her face that strikes one at the first moment; but after knowing her a fortnight, and seeing her nearly every day, I can't say where the charm lies. Is it in her soft gray eyes, I wonder, or the sweet thoughtful mouth, or the delicious smile that flashes out unawares and breaks up the thoughtful look?' This in a musing tone, to himself rather than to his auditors. 'I really don't know what it is, and I won't attempt to describe her; but she is a most enchanting girl.'

Loo drew herself farther back into her corner—coiled herself up in her obscurity, almost as if there had been some touch of the serpent in her nature. There must have been in her composition some latent vein of envy and all uncharitableness, some perverted feeling engendered out of poverty and wretchedness; for this praise of another's beauty stirred a sullen anger in her breast. This picture of a woman, charming alike in herself and her surroundings, wounded her as keenly as a premeditated insult. It seemed only a roundabout way of telling her how low and common and unworthy she was.

'Humph!' exclaimed Mr. Gurner, with a jovial significance. 'And this young lady with the spiritual countenance is the only child of a rich father, your late uncle's partner, and you see her every day. That sounds like St. George's, Hanover-square.'

Mr. Leyburne laughed in a comfortable, self-satisfied way.

'She is the dearest girl in the world,' he said; 'and I ought to be the happiest man in creation if I can win her. But you mustn't talk about any such thing, Jarred. I've no right to sit here and rhapsodise about her. It's all in the clouds yet awhile.'

'I don't suppose it will stop long in the clouds,' answered Jarred, with a faint spice of bitterness. 'There can't be much reason for waiting when there's plenty of coin. It's only we poor folks who have to hang back from the church-door for fear it should prove a short cut to the workhouse. There's my girl there now, for instance,' indicating Loo with a flourish of his pipe; 'she hasn't a bad figure-head, and would pass muster if she was tidy and better dressed. Yet I warrant she'll have to wait an uncommon time before she finds a husband that can give her three meals a day and a house to live in.'

Loo blushed scarlet at this paternal speech.

'Who said I wanted a husband, father?' she exclaimed indignantly. 'Do you think a woman has nothing better to think of than husbands? I've seen too much misery come of husbands in Voysey-street. If I have to go out charing when I'm old, I'd rather char for myself than for a drunken husband, as I've seen some do in our street.'

'A hard idea of life, as seen from Voysey-street,' said Walter, with his good-natured laugh. 'But let us hope you may not be obliged to spend all your days in Voysey-street, Miss Gurner. There are places where husbands are not all given to drink or wives reduced to charing.'

'What's the good of hoping it?' returned Loo, in her dreary way—a manner which was a youthful reflection of her grandmother's. 'I used to hope it when I was six years old, but I left off before I was seven; and now I'm nearly nineteen, and I'm not much nearer seeing the last of Voysey-street.'

'Not much nearer, so far as you know at this precise moment,' argued Walter cheerily; 'but the possibilities of youth are infinite. Cinderella's carriage and Cinderella's godmother may be waiting round the corner for you. And now, Mrs. Gurner, as it's on the stroke of midnight, and I'm afraid I've been keeping you up, I'll say good-night.' The elder lady's glance had wandered towards the press-bedstead lately, yearningly. 'But before departing I've a favour to ask you.'

The favour was Mrs. Gurner's consent to her granddaughter's sitting for Lamia; a request which the lady, although in the last stage of sleepiness, received with befitting dignity.

'Laminia!' she repeated; 'I never heard of the young person. A historical character, I suppose?'

'No, not exactly historical; a character belonging to fable and poetry.'

'A respectable young person, I presume? I couldn't think of my granddaughter sitting for any young person who was not a strictly correct character.'

'Lor, grandma,' said Loo, with a shrug, 'as if it mattered in a picture! And as if anybody who saw the picture would know *me!*'

'There are plenty in Voysey-street who would know you, and even round the corner,' answered the grandmother solemnly.

Walter, hard driven, and not feeling quite prepared to vouch for Lamia's unblemished respectability, argued that a fabulous young person was hardly subject to the laws that govern modern society; and that, moreover, perhaps very few people among those who paid their shilling to see the picture would have a very clear idea who Lamia was.

'There's something in that,' replied Mrs. Gurner. 'I have read a good deal of history in my lifetime, but I never came across this Laminia of yours.'

Thus, after a little farther argument, to give due importance to the question, Mrs. Gurner expressed her willingness that the painter should bring his canvas and colours next day, and begin his portrait of the sullen-looking damsel coiled up in the big arm-chair, who evinced no personal interest in the subject.

THE CARLISTS FORTY YEARS AGO

It has been stated by a well-known writer that events follow but do not resemble one another. History never repeats itself, not because the same causes could fail to produce the same effects, but because the causes, however similar, can never be thoroughly identical. Such a statement, no doubt, is technically true; but there are occasions when history so nearly repeats itself as to make us doubt the practical importance of the theory. The events that are now taking place in Spain exemplify our meaning. The Carlist rising in the north and south; the democratic outbreaks in Barcelona, Carthagena, and Malaga; the rise and fall of ministries; the general anarchy; even the English interference, are all events that occurred forty years ago. The history of one would do almost for the other. The actors in the drama are not all the same; but even some of them remain, once more contending for creed and king, or liberty and country. In the following pages we have endeavoured to give a short outline of the first Carlist war—a war which many of our readers can still well remember.

On the 29th September 1833 King Ferdinand died. A few months previous the Cortes had abolished the Salic law and taken the oath of allegiance to the Infanta as rightful successor to the crown. The king, by will, had appointed Queen Christina regent during the young queen's minority. Don Carlos, at the time of his brother's death, was at Lisbon, but his followers immediately rose to support his cause. Then, as now, the flame of war first blazed forth in the northern provinces. Then, as now, the sturdy peasants of Biscay, Guipuscoa, and Navarre rushed as one man to the standard of Charles V. The Marquis de Valdespina, whose name was the first to appear amongst the devoted adherents of Don Carlos, was their chief leader. Bilboa, Vittoria, and Tolosa threw open their gates to him, and Logrono soon followed their example; Pampeluna alone held out. But these successes were not destined to continue. The government established at Madrid was no weak government. The army was, as yet, strong and loyal; the people for the time devoted to their young queen. Intransigentes did not exist, and therefore, when General Saarsfeld, with the *élite* of the Spanish forces, marched against the newly-formed levies of Carlists, he swept all before him. The ebb of the tide was as rapid as the flow had been, so that by the end of 1833 the mountains of Navarre were the only strongholds held by the followers of Charles V.

The year 1834 opened with brighter prospects for them. Led by a new general—Zumalacarregui—they issued from their mountain fortresses and again occupied Guipuscoa, Biscay, and Navarre, but they were unable to hold any of the fortified towns. With only 7000 men, badly armed and deficient in artillery, they were no match for the Christinos, or troops of the regency, well-equipped and commanded by an experienced officer, General Valdez. They would not have been able to keep the field at all had not the government at this inopportune moment made itself unpopular with the Liberals. Believing, as was really the case, the lower orders to be entirely led by the priests, and therefore on the side of Don Carlos, they endeavoured to exclude them from the urban guard. This unwise regulation not only alienated the peasants, but incensed the more radical supporters of the queen. Barcelona, then as now the hot-bed of revolution, declared against the measure, and the government, too late to avoid unpopularity, were forced to modify the obnoxious law. This incident strengthened the hands of the Carlists, and prevented General Valdez employing all his forces against them. He was removed as incompetent, and Quesada, an old Castilian, appointed in his place. Don Carlos, though still in Portugal, assumed the title of king, and as Charles V. issued a proclamation condemning to death all found in arms against him. Unlike his successor, who cannot be accused of any arbitrary acts, he ordered that all magistrates not acting in his name, and all Alcaldes assisting the queen's troops, should be treated as traitors. The other side were not slow to follow his example. In fact, death awaited the unhappy Spaniard whichever side he took. These measures only tended to enhance the bitterness of the war. Quesada shot his prisoners when taken in battle; the Carlists burnt alive the queen's troops almost before the gates of Pampeluna. As Quesada succeeded no better than Valdez, he was replaced by General Rodil. This General Rodil had just driven Don Carlos and Don Miguel out of Portugal, and therefore assumed the command with a certain amount of prestige. But he was fated to meet again the man he had driven from Portugal. Don Carlos, having in the first instance retired to England, and refusing steadfastly the advice of the British Government to give up all thoughts of the Spanish throne, again left our shores, and passing through France without suspicion, joined his devoted followers in Navarre in the middle of July.

He entered upon the scene of action very much under the same auspices as his grandson entered some months ago. The Radical party in Spain, disgusted at the arbitrary measures enforced at Madrid, were doing all they could to overthrow the government, and were thus in the same way playing into the hands of the Carlists as the Intransigentes are now so effectually doing.

The volunteers of Madrid had already been disarmed; but popu-

lar fury ran so high in that city that the convents and religious houses were ransacked by the populace, and the monks massacred in their cells. Under these circumstances the appearance of Don Carlos himself on the field of action was anything but opportune for the regency. But still nothing decisive was done by either side during the remainder of the year. The same seesaw operations went on as in the previous year. Rodil first drove Zumalacarregui and his royal chief back into the fastnesses of Biscay, and then found all his work undone by a sudden irruption of the enemy into the low countries in his rear. The government at Madrid, as all governments in similar circumstances do, threw the whole blame on the general in command. Rodil was recalled, and Mina, whose popularity was great, was sent to measure himself with Charles V. He commenced a war of extermination; no one was to be spared who did not immediately submit. In his first encounter with Zumalacarregui he proved successful, and 1500 Carlists were, according to the official account, exterminated.

Thus ended the year 1834. The incidents of 1835 forcibly remind us of present events. The ministry had become most unpopular, and was tottering to its fall. In the large towns sedition was rife; the soldiery were mutinous. In Malaga the militia attempted to proclaim the Constitution of 1820, and to break the stone of the Constitution, which in Spain is equivalent to what the planting of the tree of liberty is in France. Bands of insurgents were forming all over the country, and conspiracies were being discovered daily. Under these circumstances General Mina found it difficult to hold his own at Pampeluna, notwithstanding his policy of extermination. The reinforcements, which the government at Madrid sent to him by driblets, were continually intercepted on their way, and dispersed or captured. These small reverses made Mina furious. On his way to relieve the town of Elisondo, in Navarre, closely besieged by the Carlists, he passed through a small village, called Lecaroz. The inhabitants fled at his approach, as they had, unfortunately for themselves, been obliged to sustain some Carlists a few days previous. Mina immediately burnt the village, and, having captured the inhabitants, shot every fifth man. We hope history will not so far repeat itself as to have to record such deeds as these in 1873. Such brutality not having the desired effect, Mina resigned, and Valdez was again sent to crush the Carlists. About this time England and France intervened to mitigate some of the horrors of the war, and succeeded in inducing both sides to treat their prisoners as prisoners of war. This merciful interference on our part infuriated the Radical party at Madrid, and caused serious riots. The ministry had to resign. Before resigning they had asked for help from England, which was refused; but the English government allowed the regency to enlist volunteers. Colonel Evans, afterwards Sir de Lacy Evans, headed

a band of 9000 mercenaries and embarked for Spain. All this time Zumalacarregui, the Carlist general, was daily gaining ground. In June he attacked Bilboa. General Espartero defended it. Unfortunately for the Carlist cause, their brave leader was dangerously wounded whilst inspecting the siege operations, and died in a few days. This was a grievous loss, for Zumalacarregui had been the soul of his party. The siege of Bilboa was almost immediately raised. General Cordova was now appointed to the command of the queen's troops and Moreno led the Carlists. Notwithstanding the English intervention with regard to prisoners, nothing could restrain the bitter hatred of the contending parties, and the unfortunate prisoners were butchered on both sides. The democratic fury now rose to a great height throughout all the large towns of Spain. Juntas were formed at Saragossa and Barcelona. The governors of the various provinces had to fly for their lives. Convents were ruthlessly destroyed or suppressed. Cadiz, Malaga, and Corunna soon followed the example of Barcelona, and anarchy reigned supreme. The urban guard at Madrid rose in insurrection; and if the garrison had not remained faithful, all must have been lost. At this critical moment there appeared on the scene a man who was destined for a time to save his country—M. Mendizabal. During the war with Napoleon he had fought bravely in the ranks for his country, but in 1823 he, with other Liberals, emigrated to London, and there got into serious financial difficulties. In fact, he made use of money not his own to forward the cause of Don Pedro in Portugal. Athough in Europe generally he was looked upon as an adventurer, in Spain he was considered a man of great energy and firmness. It was such a man as this who rescued his country from anarchy. On his arrival at Madrid he was immediately appointed to the head of the ministry, and inaugurated a Liberal policy. Such was the confidence he commanded throughout the country, the various juntas one after another professed themselves satisfied and submitted to the regular authorities. But however successful he was with the Radicals, he failed to overthrow the Carlists. The celebrated leader, Cabrera, now made his appearance in Lower Arragon. In the north, General Evans, with the British contingent of 9000 men, had landed at St. Sebastian, and was preparing for action. Espartero defended Bilboa, which was again threatened by the Carlists. Cordova was stationed on the Ebro. Nothing effectual was done on either side. Towards the end of the year the army of reserve under Espartero, reinforced by the English troops, succeeded in uniting their forces with those of General Cordova on the Ebro, but no active operations were commenced. In 1836 the war blazed forth with greater fury. On one occasion, when the Carlists were besieged by General Mina, they threw their prisoners from the walls, and shot them as they fell. In retaliation for this, the inhabitants of Barce-

lona, ever ready to set the law at defiance, massacred about eighty Carlist prisoners, who were awaiting their trial; even the wounded being taken from the hospitals and shot in the streets. At the beginning of the year, the combined forces of Cordova, Espartero, and General Evans endeavoured to drive the Carlists from the heights of Arlaban, not far from Vittoria, but failed in the attempt. Cabrera was carrying fire and sword through Lower Arragon, and on one occasion put to death two Alcaldes, who had been appointed by the regency. This gave rise to a deed of revenge which stood out in all its ghastly horror prominent even in those days of blood. The mother of Cabrera, an old woman of seventy years, was seized, and, by Mina's orders, shot in the public square of Tortosa. Cabrera immediately shot the wives of four officers who happened to be in his hands. About this time the English government determined to do very much what our government has thought fit to do in the present war. The British admiral was commanded to give the queen's general the coöperation of his squadron, to protect from capture the seaports held by the queen, and even to assist in recovering any which might have been taken by the Carlists. Taking advantage of this assistance, General Evans, at the head of the British Legion, endeavoured to drive the Carlist force from before St. Sebastian. After a murderous fight, in which the British alone lost nine hundred killed and wounded, including seventy officers, they were only able to drive the besieging force a mile from their former lines. While the war thus raged a change of ministry took place at Madrid. Mendizabal retired, and Isturitz endeavoured to form an administration. This again aroused the anger of the Radicals throughout the country, and improved the chances of the Carlists. Taking advantage of the crisis, General Gomez, at the head of 7000 men, broke through Cordova's lines, and made a raid as far as Gallicia. Espartero was sent in pursuit, but failed to come up with the dashing Carlist general. Disgusted with the Isturitz government, Saragossa, Malaga, Granada, and Valencia again rose in insurrection. Madrid also declared against the queen. The troops, having surrounded the palace, forced the queen regent to grant the Constitution of 1812, and made her dismiss Quesada, the brave and faithful commandant of Madrid. To escape the fury of the mob, he fled from the capital; but was pursued by his relentless enemies, and massacred in cold blood. In the midst of this anarchy Gomez again electrified the whole of Spain by his daring raids. Twice in the course of a few months he crossed from one end of Spain to the other, although surrounded by three different armies. He seized towns, took prisoners, captured ammunition, guns, and booty of every kind, and was on the point of entering Madrid itself at the head of his band of heroes.

The part the English took in this civil war is certainly not very praiseworthy or brilliant. The policy of assisting the queen to oppose

her uncle was altogether questionable, but to do so and to fail made matters much worse. In July of this year General Evans, as if acting in the name of the queen, directed that all Englishmen taken fighting for Don Carlos should be shot,—a strong measure, considering he was himself acting on his own responsibility. After this little escapade, he endeavoured to take Fontarabia, but was repulsed with heavy loss. Espartero having taken the command of the queen's troops in the place of Cordova, the Carlists, under Villareal, again endeavoured to carry Bilboa. In this attempt they very nearly succeeded. In fact, they had taken the suburbs and summoned the town to surrender, when Espartero, after several ineffectual attempts, forced his way into the place and relieved the garrison. This was a fatal blow to the Carlists, which they hardly recovered from. The commencement of 1837 again witnessed a disastrous discomfiture of the British Legion. General Evans had decided, in conjunction with Espartero and Saarsfeld, to attack the Carlist lines round St. Sebastian. At the first onset the Anglo-Christino army carried all before it, and drove the enemy back to the town of Hernani. But here the Carlists were reinforced by Don Sebastian, the nephew of Don Carlos, who suddenly threw himself with all his forces on the left wing of the British, and completely routed them, the Royal Marines alone saving them from total destruction. The British loss amounted to nearly 1000 men killed and wounded. But, although the Carlists were thus able to defend their lines, a little later the same lines were carried with hardly any opposition. The reason of this was soon made apparent. Taking advantage of the concentration of Espartero's troops before St. Sebastian, Don Carlos and his nephew, Don Sebastian, determined to follow the example of Gomez in the previous year, and make a raid through Arragon, Valencia, and Catalonia. After defeating different detachments of the Christinos they effected a junction with Cabrera, the brave and active leader of the Carlist bands in the south of Spain. Sometimes victorious, sometimes beaten, this gallant band of 12,000 men burst its way through all obstacles, and baffled all the efforts of the united Christino forces. Fortune seemed to smile on them at last. The capital was within their grasp. By the middle of September Don Sebastian appeared before the gates of Madrid at the head of his cavalry. He might have carried the city if he had known how feebly it was guarded. Here, however, his success ended. Espartero, who had been vainly pursuing the Carlists throughout their rapid raid, at length came up with them and gradually drove them back across the Ebro to their old lines in Navarre, Cabrera retreating to Arragon with his original band. At this time General Evans returned to England with the remnant of his Legion, a few volunteers remaining still in Spain. They arrived in their native country in a most miserable condition, having shown great courage and endured great

hardships, but without having obtained any substantial success. The few that remained fought for a short time under General O'Connell, but the Spanish government failing to support them they disbanded, and the British Legion ceased to exist. The kindly feeling displayed by England towards the government at Madrid was certainly not reciprocated. A certain number of the Spanish people are very wrath at the present moment at our interfering with the siege of Carthagena. We appear to have fallen into the same disgrace during the war in 1837. In fact, it seems to be a part of our policy to meddle and muddle with the affairs of Spain whenever internal discord breaks out there. In 1837 we had the misfortune of very much displeasing the good people of Barcelona. One of those spasmodic insurrections, so frequent in that city, having broken forth, the governor-general claimed the assistance of the English admiral, and having obtained it he drove the insurgents from the houses in which they had barricaded themselves, and dispersed the National Guard, who had sided with them.

This success, being mainly due to the courage displayed by the British marines, greatly incensed the Republican party throughout the whole of Catalonia, and a remonstrance was sent to the government at Madrid, protesting against the fact of 'English soldiers, calling themselves allies, steeping their bayonets in the blood of Spaniards, and declaring that those cruel auxiliaries had deserved the implacable hatred vowed against them by the National Guards.' History certainly repeats itself, but we do not always lay it to heart. Throughout 1837 ministers rose and fell with the same regularity and facility as their successors in 1873. Mendizabal gave way to Espartero, Espartero to Bardaji, Bardaji to Ofalia. The Carlist cause in 1838 was on the wane. Mutiny began to break out amongst the troops, and discontent amongst the officers. Garcia advanced as far as Toledo, but only to be driven back with serious loss by the Christinos General Flinter. Cabrera, to a certain extent, redeemed these reverses by the capture of Morella in Valencia, for which exploit he was made Count Morella by Don Carlos. Saragossa also for a few hours fell into the hands of the Carlists, but they were unable to hold it. One reason for the ill-success of the Carlist cause at this period was the feeling of suspicion that pervaded the mind of Don Carlos with regard to his Basque and Navarrese officers. He suspected them of wishing to confine the war to their own provinces; and therefore no longer trusted some of his most able leaders. Zarintigui, Gomez, Elio, and Eguia were all in disgrace. The treatment of their leaders disgusted the Navarrese. They mutinied at Estella, where the Carlist junta was sitting, and forced the members of it to fly for their lives. This ill-feeling would have spread farther still had not Marotto, an old Basque officer, been appointed to the chief command of the Carlist forces. Soon after

his appointment Espartero, who had been menacing Estella, fell back first to Logrono, and then marched into Castile. In the south, Cabrera, after the capture of Morella and the gallant and successful defence of it against a powerful Christino army under Oraa and Pardinas, pursued the latter general to a place called Maella, and there totally routed him. Pardinas himself was killed, and 3000 of his men were either slain or taken prisoners. Cabrera on this occasion put to death 180 prisoners, which so infuriated the people of Valencia that they slaughtered fifty-five Carlists and shot the commandant of their own troops—Mendez Vigo—who endeavoured to appease their fury. These bloody reprisals were carried on for months. Fortunately, in this respect, history does not repeat itself. Towards the end of the year Don Carlos was married to his sister-in-law, the widow of Pedro and mother of Don Sebastian, the Princess of Beira. At Madrid another change of ministry occurred, chiefly owing to the machinations of Espartero. The Duke de Frias was placed at the head of the cabinet. The new ministry, while ostensibly relying on Espartero, depended upon Narvaez, who at this time was at the head of the army of reserve in Andalusia. To him they looked for protection against the Exaltado party and the fierce leaders of the Democrats. O'Donnell—another name well known in after history—was made Viceroy of Navarre. But in Narvaez the ministry had for support a broken reed. The very man on whom they lavished honours headed an insurrection at Seville, and endeavoured to induce the army of reserve to pronounce in his favour. In this he, fortunately for the government, failed, and Seville without a blow submitted. Narvaez was summoned to Madrid, to explain his conduct before a court-martial.

Before the end of the year another change took place in the ministry, and Perez de Castro was made president of the council.

The only other incident of note that occurred in 1838 was the appearance upon the scene of Muniagorri, the Fuerist chief, who endeavoured to rally to his standard a middle party opposed as much to Don Carlos as to the queen. He appears to have been supported to some extent by our government, but he was unable to achieve any success. 1839 was fated to witness the collapse of the Carlist cause and the end of the civil war which, for nearly six years, had devastated Spain. At the beginning of the year the Christino army amounted to 225,000 men and 138 pieces of artillery. The Carlist army was only 63,000 strong, with 80 pieces of cannon. At this time General Espartero commanded the northern army; General Seoane commanded in Gallicia; the Baron de Meer in Catalonia; Van Halen in Arragon, Valencia, and Murcia. Quiroga had the command of Madrid. On the side of the Carlists Maroto commanded the northern army opposed to Espartero; Cabrera, the southern army. The Carlists began the campaign with every disadvantage;

outnumbered at every point, and weakened by internal disunion. Although Maroto's appointment to the chief command had appeased to some extent the mutinous conduct of the troops, yet he was destined through his treachery to be the cause of Don Carlos's final overthrow. The king, although outwardly confiding in him, suspected him. The ministers of the king, especially the minister of war, Tigeiro, endeavoured in every way to increase this suspicion, and to procure his dismissal. At one moment they nearly succeeded. Don Carlos agreed to appoint Garcia in his place. Maroto being apprised of his fate immediately arrested thirteen officers, Garcia being one, had them tried by a military commission appointed by himself, which found six guilty, and they were shot without appeal. When Don Carlos heard of this deed of blood he proclaimed Maroto a traitor. Maroto immediately marched his army against the king. The king gave way, and begged Maroto to be pacified. It was in this state of discord the campaign began. Espartero was not slow to take advantage of circumstances so propitious. He first attacked the lines of Ramales, a strong position held by the Carlists near Santander. After an obstinate struggle he took them, and immediately advanced upon Biscay. Maroto retired without offering battle. Espartero carried all before him, and for successes so brilliant and decisive he was made the Duke of Victory.

In the mean while Cabrera was holding his own against great odds in the south. Van Halen, at the head of sixteen battalions of infantry and 1200 cavalry, endeavoured to drive him out of Segura, but at the last moment withdrew his forces without striking a blow. Such was the influence of Cabrera's name. The enthusiasm for the Carlist cause was not yet dead, as the town of Ripoll in Catalonia can well testify. This little place was attacked by the Christinos. Five hundred of the inhabitants defended it against 8000 troops. Three times the assault was repulsed. At last a breach was made in the wall twenty feet wide, and the enemy entered. All the women and children were put to death, the town was burnt to the ground, and 900 persons perished in the flames. In Valencia, O'Donnell, at the head of 14,000 men, was entirely master of the situation. Town after town fell before his army, and even Cabrera himself was unable to arrest his course. The end was fast approaching. Already Maroto in the north had opened communications with Espartero for a pacification, by which the three provinces of Biscay, Guipuscoa, and Alava were to be secured the possession of their Fueros or provincial rights. Don Carlos upon this, seeing that he was betrayed, fled rapidly into Navarre, leaving Maroto to make what terms he liked with the enemy. Espartero at this time was investing Bergera, a place destined to witness the termination of this unhappy struggle. Here on the 31st August 1839 a final convention was concluded, and

Maroto with his troops laid down their arms. Lord John Hay and Colonel Wylde were greatly instrumental in bringing about this agreement. By this convention—well known in after years as 'the embrace of Bergera'—Espartero undertook to secure to the Basque Provinces their Fueros, and promised that the soldiers of the Carlist army should be immediately admitted into the service of the queen. The convention having been concluded, Espartero hastened to overtake Don Carlos, who, with some battalions of Navarre and Alava, was retreating towards the frontier of France. On the 14th September the unfortunate king, accompanied by Generals Elio and Nexin, and the faithful few who still refused to surrender, crossed the border line, and, by direction of the French government, took up his residence at Bourges. Cabrera soon followed his master, and with 20,000 men also took refuge in France. Thus ended the civil war, and thus vanished the hopes and expectations of those who for six long years had so valiantly supported the cause of Don Carlos,—hopes that at one time seemed on the point of being fulfilled, expectations that even at the last might well have been realised had not jealousy and treason pervaded the councils of the king. Most of the actors in this unhappy drama have gone to their rest; but some names still live amongst us. Espartero, Elio, Cabrera, these and others of less account are still alive,—men who, in the present unhappy state of their country, can see but a repetition of events which in their younger days they so sensibly moulded. Although the present war does not appear to be likely to last so long as the one we have just described, yet in its prominent features, as we have already stated, it is wonderfully the same; and its end, we cannot help believing, will also be the same. Jealousy, treason, and discontent are worse foes than an open enemy. It was so in 1839; it will be so in 1873. The present war may soon cease, but it will revive again in after years. The followers of Don Carlos, although defeated, are still there; the peasants of Navarre, Alava, Biscay, and Castile will never desert his cause; their interests, their traditions, their religion are bound up with it.

F. T. MONRO.

A FREE LUNCH

THE 'Free Lunch,' one of the 'institutions' of America, is provided with unusual liberality in the Crescent City. It has no connection with Mr. Bright's ideal free breakfast table. Its freedom consists in this—that the consumer does not pay for it. I have heard of ordinaries in the old country at which dinner was given gratis, but you were expected to order a bottle of wine, the price of which was made to cover the cost of the whole repast. I have also been told of people who tried to get the better of the Excise by selling you a straw, and at the same time making you a present of a glass of something to drink. The enjoyment of my free lunch is not embittered by the reflection that there is any such dodge about it. My digestion is not impaired by qualms of conscience. I have defrauded no one. I have eaten of the best, I am satisfied, and I am welcome. I pay for my glass of sherry, my 'brandy squirt' (the New Orleans equivalent, and not a good one, for b.-and-s.), or my 'chop' of ale, exactly the same sum as I should expend for such beverages if I took them at a time when no lunch was going on, or if I ate nothing. And the best of it is, that if I have no money in my pocket to drink withal, I may eat my fill, and no one will say me nay.

The Free Lunch is spread in symposiums the like of which are unknown to you. Your pewter-covered bar, with a fat publican behind it, wheezing in an atmosphere of stale beer and sweet biscuits, or your refreshment saloon, resplendent with coloured glass, and bewildering with chignons, are nothing like them. A spacious room, with little or no ornament about it, with latticed doors leading from the street, a long array of counter, a long array of business-looking bottles behind it, a long array of white-aproned and snowy-shirted attendants, deftly mixing 'drinks' between the two, and dispensing crushed ice lavishly in bright copper scoops, as though they were cashiers in the Golconda Bank unlimited, and you are taking the proceeds of your cheque for two millions, in diamonds—that is a New Orleans drinking bar. At a side table stands all day long a supply of bread, butter, crackers, cheese, pickles, dried ham and beef, and other snacks, at the mercy of all comers; but from 10 A.M. to mid-day is spread a trussled board, groaning under a substantial repast. Oyster soup, when those bivalves are in season, sheep-head (the turbot of the Mexican Gulf), turkey, ham, beef, and mutton, roast and boiled, in abundance; vegetables *ad lib.*, a dex-

terous carver to slice for you, and no one to cry 'Hold, enough!' if, like Oliver, you ask for more. This is the free lunch.

But do respectable people go into bar-rooms? There was a time in the history of New Orleans when refusal to 'take a drink' was an insult calling for satisfaction by sword or gun. Even now it is hard work to get an excuse accepted. A vast amount of business is done in the street—Carrondelet-street especially, and I may safely say that no single bale of cotton or bag of oilcake is bought or shipped without the transaction being solemnised by 'taking a drink.' Dry bargains are forbidden by a sort of unwritten Statute of Frauds. Hawkins and Santini are notaries public unenrolled. These bar-rooms are unacknowledged offices, but many a good bargain is made before them every day, and sealed with 'a drink.' Politicians also are a thirsty race, and must be prepared to treat largely. Eloquence is all very well in its way, but a glass of whisky 'straight' as a persuasive influence is not to be despised. The operation known as 'lobbying,' though it owes its name to the lobbies of the Legislative Chambers, is now carried on, for the most part, in the nearest bar-room, where the dusky conscript fathers who now rule Louisiana settle many of the affairs of the country—let us hope for the country's good—over drinks. Now, as cotton and politics absorb nineteen-twentieths of the population, the question which heads this paragraph is answered. The gravest of the grave may be seen going into a drinking bar without detriment to his character; and he who makes an unsteady exit therefrom, though it should be in broad daylight, is not thought the worse of on that account. In short, libations to Bacchus are tolerated at present in New Orleans much as they were with us at home when the present century was in its teens; only the altar is set up in the bar-room instead of on the dinner-table, and John Barleycorn (in the form of whisky) has ousted the monopoly for providing the sacrifice formerly enjoyed by the grape. Little or no drinking takes place at or after dinner, or in private houses. It is all done openly at the bar.

What is 'a drink'? In one sense of the question it is fifteen cents, or about sevenpence—no matter of what it be compounded. Ask for whisky, rum, gin, sherry, *straight—i.e.* raw—for a sherry cobbler, mint julep, Santa Cruz punch, Calauba squirt, cock-tail of any composition, lemonade, or what you will—it is 'a drink,' and its cost is fifteen cents. Ask for anything 'straight' or to be mixed by yourself, and no measured ration is served you; the bottle is handed, and you pour at your own sweet will. At some bars where an extra succulent free lunch is served up-stairs to the habitués of the place, 'a drink' is twenty-five cents. Before the war the universal tariff was ten cents. Brandy, in any form, is extra.

The population of New Orleans is in round figures 191,000. It supports 800 licensed bar-rooms and at least another 400 institu-

tions, such as groceries, coffee-houses, &c., wherein liquor may be had unknown to the city assessors. Now put aside as non-drinkers (such as women, children, temperance folk, sick people, and the like) only one half the population, and there is one liquor shop for every eighty thirsty souls. Of the 800 legitimate bar-rooms, I should say that 500 are within a half-mile circuit of the Clay statue —the centre of business New Orleans. I know of one point within this zone from which you can count fourteen bar-rooms in 230 yards. And they all give free lunches! Is, then, the trade overcrowded? Is bar-keeping a bad business in that sordid sense of the adjective which would imply that it does not pay? I am afraid it is one of the best, in that respect, we have; and it is appalling to think of the number of drinks that must be taken to keep it up. Such a meal as is provided as a 'free lunch' at a first-class bar-room, if had at a restaurant, would cost at least a dollar. Take the profits of 'a drink' at five cents, and it follows that there must be twenty drinkers for every free luncheon, to make things balance on this item, but with rent, wages, license, and stock-in-trade yet to be provided for. The rent of a well-situated bar is not less than 1000*l.* a year—its outgoings about 40*l.* a day. I know of one which, even in the bad times which followed the 'late unpleasantness' with the United States, made 75,000 dollars clear profit in a twelvemonth!

But let me return to the free lunch. This is an institution which could not exist out of the soil in which it has been gradually developed. Attempts were made to transplant it in New York, and, I believe, in Boston. They failed. It is like the British Constitution — a thing of checks and counter-checks, held together by compromises, and regulated by unwritten laws as vague as they are respectable. Like Topsy—it 'growed.' Some enterprising bar-keeper, stung by competition, added to the universal crackers and cheese, by way of attracting custom. Great are the powers of competition! Once upon a time, rival coaches on the Brighton road not only carried passengers for nothing, but gave them glasses round—hot *with*—into the bargain. So with the free lunch. Competitors followed suit, and gradually something else, and something else, and something else was added to the repast until we find it what it is. It would be difficult to make it better. Another condition in its favour is the absence in New Orleans of the 'rough,' as you have him over the water. We have plenty of rough people, but no roughs such as would render a similar entertainment impossible in London. Labour of all sorts is also so well paid that the class that might ruin it by abuse does not exist—or at any rate does not unfairly use its privilege. I am told that free lunch obtains in San Francisco; but with this exception it is not to be found, as I have described it, out of New Orleans.

When the moral philosopher has discussed his soup, his slice of

sheep-head, and his help of turkey, and has, let us hope, taken the customary 'drink,' he may well employ his time in studying the natural history of the free luncher. Here is the man of business, whose work has called him so early from his dwelling that he has not had time to breakfast. He has 'struck' a good thing (say in oilcake) that morning, and is in high spirits. With a friendly nod at the bar-tender, whom he knows, he pitches in hastily. Here is the gentleman whose fishy eyes and trembling hand denote that he has earned his lunch over-night, but who lacks the appetite to enjoy it. He is well known, and the choicest morsels are piled on his plate, from which he picks half a mouthful or so, and then retires to the bar for a brandy-squirt. Loafing about the doors and in corners are individuals who are waiting on Providence; *i. e.* for the entrance of some one who will stand treat of a drink, and so entitle them to a place at the table which they are shy of taking. The delight of these people to see you about midday, the interest they take in your affairs, and the health and welfare of your family, is only appeased by an inquiry on your part as to what it shall be. 'It' is a drink. Very different from these is the 'jolly dog' who, without a cent in his pocket, takes his lunch with the confidence that he has paid for it over and over again in the past; and the hope that he will put it all back, and more, in the future. Many a champagne cocktail has he 'stood' at that bar, and will again when luck comes round. The chances are that the bar-keeper himself will treat *him*, if no one else does; but he scorns to tout for drinks. Not so great a favourite is the regular free luncher; a temperate person, who eats his dollar's worth, takes his fifteen cents of liquor, and departs with the idea that he has patronised the establishment. He is as difficult to please as those supporters of the drama who go in with orders. Who is this hungry-looking man in seedy black, who stands apart eyeing the smoking viands? Perhaps a clerk, or schoolmaster, or artist, emigrated from Europe, whom somebody (who knows nothing whatever about what he recommends) has told that he is sure to find employment in the Crescent City; and who has been wandering about for days in search of it, in vain. If he could roll cotton bales on the levee he might earn his three dollars a day; but he has not strength for this. By the sweat of his brains alone he can live, and there is no brain work to be got. Some one has told him of free lunches, and hunger has so far got the better of pride as to drive him past the doors. He has plenty of stomach, but no heart to avail himself of the hint. Now we see the free lunch in its noblest aspect. The carver catches his eye, and with a wave of his long glittering blade beckons him to the table. No questions; no 'Well, you can have some *this* time;' no dole flung at him in charity (?). The carver calls him 'sir,' and is as attentive as though he were a

millionaire. Our poor friend not only lunches, but breakfasts, dines, and sups that day like a lord.

It is part of the *lex non scripta* of the free lunch that the luncher who is first 'through' (to use the vernacular) should go and order drinks for his companion. Everybody knows everybody, and so few lunch alone; indeed, it is almost an offence against propriety to do so. It is amusing to note how slow some are over their last piece of celery or salad; to observe with what care they pick up the last crumbs of their repast, though they might be rehelped, or help themselves to a fresh supply. And this, not through what we call meanness (American *mean* and English *mean* are different qualities); but out of that love for getting the better of your neighbour in small matters which is common to both sides of the Atlantic. Meanness is not a Southern vice. The man who is scraping his plate over yonder to gain time and escape paying for drinks will stand bottles by and by with pleasure, only he likes to do the 'smart' thing just now. There are, of course, exceptions. 'Dead beats,' who liquor, and smoke, and chew all day at other folks' expense, are to be found; but a lavish liberality in 'standing,' an eagerness to be the first to say 'Will you join me?' is the rule. 'Will you join me?' does not mean paying half. A stranger never pays for drinks in America. Therefore, O reader, should you ever be thirsty in company with your Transatlantic cousin, and assuage your wants together at home, down with your money like a man, and pay a small instalment of the debt your travelling fellow-countrymen owe.

As I write I hear, in fancy, a wail raised by a certain party that the pages of *Belgravia* should be polluted by a paper about 'drinks;' by praise of an institution supported by drinking. No one regrets more than does this writer the unfortunate prevalence of this vice in the city where he lives. But his mission is not to regenerate it. We did not put down social toping in England by personal abuse of topers, or by ignoring what they did. It was put down slowly by public opinion, born of education and refinement. As the same influences filter downwards, our 'new masters' will turn from the errors of their ways. The same thing will happen here, all in good time. What is now written is neither in excuse nor in warning, but simply to state what is, and in common justice to show that there is some good in it.

A. DE FONBLANQUE.

H. French, del. J. R. B

SALLY'S

SAL PARKER'S GHOST

How far to Oaklands now, sir? Well, I should think it were five mile quite;
But I sha'n't be long a-coaching yer there, this beautiful moonlight night.
She's as good a hoss as the Squire has got, is this old mare, yer know;
Just feel her mouth and give her her head, and then she's bound to go.

Can I give yer a song to pass the time? Well, no; I can holler and shout;
But I warn't in the way, yer see, when they give the singing faces out;
I should frighten you and the hoss as well, if I tried my wocal skill,
So I think I'll say—Kim up, yer brute; I'll teach yer to shy, I will!

What was the most remarkablest thing that ever happened to me?
Well, I'm blow'd if I know, sir, and that's the truth; and I kind o' fancy, yer see,
You're looking out for a bit o' life, as'll do to put in a tale,
For I heerd 'em say 'twas a littery gent as I'd got to meet at the rail.

Ha, ha! you're right, sir. I warn't brought up in this present crib of mine,
Which driving a hansom cab in town has bin my regular line;
And that reminds me of sumthink once that was werry strange and queer—
You may put *that* down in a book, if yer like, for 'tis true as I'm sittin' here.

When I fust went up to London, yer see, as a hulking country lad,
I got a helper's place in a mews, work heavy and wages bad;
But I jest kept on in my plodden' way, for I didn't mean to be beat,
Till, step by step, I'd rose in life to a hansom cabman's seat.

And then I married—at last, at last!—for me and my pretty Sal
Had bin sweethearts in the dear old days, as country boy and gal;
And she'd promised to wait for me when I went to London to try my fate,
With the thought of her in her country home to keep me steady and straight.

I used to wonder like at times whatever it was she could see,
Such a wee, sweet, pretty, modest lass, in a great rough fellow like me;
But she left her country lanes, dear heart, and her sweetest smiles she brought
To brighten the cabman's happy home in a dingy London court.

And we was werry happy, we was; and I think we was happier still
When there come a little baby to nuss, and a little mouth to fill!
It ain't all pleasure a cabman's life, but when hard thoughts 'ud come,
I'd only to think of the wee bit babe, and the bonnie wife at home.

So things went on for a couple o' years in humble comfort and joy;
With two little children in our home—a gal and a baby boy!
When the fever come to our little court on a sudden like, yer know,
And the light o' my happy home went out, and my heart was broke at a blow!

I'd wanted the missus and bairns to go to her mother's house to stay,
But she wouldn't hear of leaving me, not even for a day,
So we just kept on, and left it to God; and Sal she was allus found
Acting a Sister o' Mercy's part to the poor sick creeturs around.

But when the fever fust broke out she'd made me promise, yer see,
With her arm about my neck, one night, as she sat upon my knee,
That if so be she was took herself, for the children's sake and my own,
I'd get her into horspital at once to take her chance alone.

'Twas a trying time, and no mistake, with death a-hovering near;
And I used to watch the missus and kids with a jealous kind o' fear,
Till I noticed, one day, that her bonnie face look'd flush'd and heavy-eyed,
And, ah! she was taken bad that night a-lying by my side.

I thought me then of the promise I'd made, and my heart was strangely stirr'd,
But the poor dear wife was braver than me, and she made me keep my word;
She went without a good-bye to the bairns, though it almost broke her heart,
And wouldn't even give me a kiss when the time had come to part.

I got some neighbours to look to the bairns, and I went to my work next day,
But how I got through the weary time 'twould puzzle me to say,
For I seem'd quite dazed and misty-like, as though in a dream or worse,
And a leaden dread of sorrow to come hung over me like a curse.

She'd made me promise I wouldn't try to see her while she was bad,
But of course I was allus about the place what little leisure I had,
And when they said she was getting round, and 'ud soon be home once more,
I thought to myself that welcomer words I'd never heerd before.

But the sixth day arter she left her home, I got a letter as said—
O God, it makes me shudder now!—that my Sally was dead—was dead!
She was dead o' the fever, and coffin'd down for ever from mortal sight,
And if I'd see her put in her grave I'd have to come that night.

What follow'd was like a dreadful dream. I lost my head, I think;
I know there was tearful women about, who brought me food and drink;
And I had some black put on to my hat, and was taken out somewhere,
And I stood at night by an open grave, and saw a coffin there!

They brought me home, and by slow degrees it all grew clear and plain,
And I mind me well of the passionate tears that I fancy saved my brain;
And I fell on my knees beside the bed—though I thought my heart would break—
And pray'd for strength to bear it all for her little children's sake.

Her children's sake! The two wee bairns, who was orphans now, yer know,
The neighbours had took 'em away for a bit—and perhaps it was better so;
God knows that better or truer friends had never man before;
Ah, 'tis little you gentlefolks can know of the care of the poor for the poor!

A week had pass'd, and I sat one night by the dying fire alone,
A brooding and broken-hearted man whose hope in life was gone,
When I heerd a sudden footfall without that kind o' startled me then,
For 'twas like the step of the dear dead wife, who would never walk again.

I thought 'twas a neighbour about, may be, and went to the window near,
But I started back, with a bitter cry and a sudden frightful fear,
For there, with its wild white face to the pane, I saw as plain as life,
An awful Something a-peering in, in the likeness of my wife!

It beckon'd to me with its phantom hand, and I felt that my hour was nigh,
And I soon must join my Sally again in the better home on high,

When, ah, the door flew open, and there, O there, It stood on the floor!
And a sudden mist come over me, and I recollect no more.

When I come to myself I was lying down on our bit of a sofy there,
And the neighbours was gather'd about me then with a pitying startled air;
I felt quite dazed and misty at fust, and I swooned agen almost
When the terrible truth come back to me—the open door and the ghost!

They tried to soothe me, the women did, and said I must bear it well,
But there'd bin a sad mistake, and they'd got some happy news to tell;
Then I heard a sudden sob and a cry, that come from behind the rest,
And my Sally was kneeling by my side, with her head upon my breast!

* * * * *

Her story was simple. With care and skill she'd begun to mend apace,
So was moved to the convalescent ward for another to take her place;
But in the hurry her name, yer see, was left up over the bed,
So that when the other poor woman sunk they thought it was Sal was dead!

* * * * *

I'm a roughish sort myself, I am, but I leave yer to understand
What my feelings was as we sat that night a-talking hand in hand,
With the light of my life brought suddenly back, when all seem'd shadder and gall,
And my heart aglow with passionate thanks to the merciful Giver of all.

But I'd had enough of yer London courts, and we both was shaky and queer;
So I wrote for a crib as was advertised by the good old master here.
And here's the lodge, with Sally herself a waiting to open the gate—
Hi, Sal! yer may cook them bloaters now; I'll be in directly, mate!

EDWIN COLLER.

THAT POOR DEAR CAPTAIN LAMBSWOOL

A Tale of the Martyrdom of Man

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

THIS paper being—as you may perceive by a reference to the sub-title thereof—a tale illustrative of the martyrdom of man, it might, with the greatest propriety perhaps, be dedicated to Mr. Winwood Reade. But as, in the first instance, Mr. Winwood Reade happens to be (so they tell me, at least) on the West Coast of Africa, where I earnestly hope that he may 'scape unharmed from all the perils arising from jungle-fever, the Control Department, and Ashantee braves armed with Birmingham 'park-palings' at ten shillings apiece; as, in the second place, Mr. Reade, even if he were in England, might not very much care about my dedicating a story to him; and as, in the third and last instance, it is not customary to dedicate magazine articles to anybody, I shall proceed at once, after the manner of Homer and other celebrated literary characters, to plunge *in medias res*; and (a wonder, I acknowledge, with me) to recount the story I have just now on my mind without any preliminary digressions, or otherwise objectionable beatings about the bush—reserving to myself, however, the right to express an opinion that the *Martyrdom of Man* was a very good book, and deserved far better treatment at the hands of the reviewers than it actually received.

His name was Lambswool—Hercules Samson Agamemnon Lambswool—at least it was thus, with the suffix of 'Gent.,' that I read of his being gazetted to a cornetcy *vice* the Honourable Atkinson Trufitt Rimmelsbury, commonly called Viscount Doubledummy, retired. What year was that in? That in which Plancus was consul? Scarcely; Plancus and his confounded consulate have, thank the Olympian deities, long since been 'played out.' At all events, it was some time between the termination of the Crimean war and the beginning of the campaign of 1866. He (Lambswool), at the period when this history concerns itself with him, stood six-feet-two in his stockings; and he was a captain in the Royal Horse-guards Blue.

Does *that* announcement startle you? Does it give you the *chair de poule?* Does it 'fetch' you? It surely should. It has made *me* quake almost as I penned the words. For ere, like the Shepherd in Virgil, I grew acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks; and ere, to put the case another way, I had

been through the mill, and seen the elephant, and wandered generally behind the scenes of Life's theatre, even to the tapping of the cocoa-nut for the milk I dreamed was there, but finding nothing but a smooth deceptive hollowness—hollow and smooth as a garden-party within—I used to look on a captain, nay, on a lieutenant or a cornet in the Blues, as an awful being. Some portion of my dread for these terrible cavaliers may have been due to the grim stories my nurse used to tell me of the days when the Blues were hooted at by the mob as the 'Piccadilly Butchers'—when they sabred the Great Unwashed in front of Sir Francis Burdett's house (the Baroness Burdett Coutts, bless her charitable heart! lives there now), and thwacked the multitude with the flat of their swords at the funeral of Queen Caroline. At all events I feared the Blues. 'Injuns,' according to Artemus Ward, 'is pison:' the effect produced on my senses in youth by the Blues more nearly resembled the action ascribed to the upas-tree. They filled me with a deadly fascination. The aspect of a subaltern in the foot regiments of the Household Brigade I was able to support with tolerable equanimity; and I never, so far as I can remember, fainted away at beholding an officer in the First or Second Life-guards, even in the fullest of 'figs;' but come to the Blues, and the case was altered. Madam, I regarded those warriors with sensations in which deep reverence and enthusiastic admiration were mingled with unutterable consternation. I shivered and 'felt bad' when I encountered an officer in that distinguished regiment. He was *so* tall, *so* haughty-looking, so much—physically and morally—above poor little me. Did you never, my dear, thus secretly regard your governess, or the family lawyer, or, in particular, the dear, dear clergyman when the liturgy was over, and he, having exchanged his surplice and hood for a Geneva gown, came rustling and creaking up the pulpit-stairs, and, ere he read out the text, looked so angelically round the church and up at the sounding-board, that you almost wonder that one of Grinling Gibbons's little cherubs—say that you went to church at St. James's, Piccadilly—did not fly to settle on his head, or hang a wreath of fruit and flowers, beautifully carved in oak, round his precious neck? Yet as you admired you feared him. He seemed to be able to discern your inmost thoughts—to know all about you; that there was a letter left for you at the circulating library last Friday—a letter which your mamma never saw; that you had at that moment an ounce and a half of almond-rock in your pocket, wrapped up in a fragment of the *Family Herald;* that you had commenced to suck those comfits before the second lesson, and intended to finish them comfortably during the sermon.

So, two thousand years ago, haply, might some humble Roman 'pleb'—some harmless poet, who hung about the *thermæ* in the hope of getting a smile and an invitation to supper from an affable

patrician—some poor creature of a scribe, who scraped up his living by graving epigrams on his waxen tablets, have 'felt bad,' even to the thongs of his sandals, when he met, thundering along the Via Triumphalis, a centurion of the Prætorian Guards. It must be owned that our Blues are not privileged to sell the Empire to the highest bidder. They are not even—poor fellows!—allowed to buy and sell their own commissions. This is not a digression.

There have been seasons when the spectacle even of a private in the Household Cavalry talking to a nurserymaid in Kensington-gardens, or swishing his off-spur with his riding-whip—why do cavalry soldiers, who are not allowed to use whips when they ride, always carry those *frustra* when they are on foot?—has made my teeth chatter in my head; but a gentleman in the Blues, bearing her Majesty's commission! Let me draw a veil over the picture of pusillanimity which I then presented. The ineffable Entity used, ere I had seen the elephant, to terrify me as direly as the spectre of the Commendatore frightened Don Juan's valet. Leporello, you will remember, got underneath the table (just as Mrs. Bancroft is accustomed to do so cleverly in *Caste*) when the phantom statue came clumping—can't you hear the clang of his horrible stone boots now?—into the supper-room; but there is no table beneath which you can crouch, say, in the Mall of St. James's Park, when her Majesty, attended by the Yeomen of the Guard and an escort of the Blues, goes by on her way to open the session of Parliament—used to go by, I should say, perhaps.

I have seen him thus—our splendid and valiant Captain Hercules Lambswool—in attendance on his royal Mistress in the good old times, ere Shillibeer and the directors of the Necropolis Company became the chief gentlemen-ushers and masters of the revels at the Court of England. I have seen the captain riding by the carriage-window of Royalty, and I have trembled. Gigantic yet serene, puissant yet languid, beautiful, august, and terrible, yet 'mild as the moonbeams.' Look at his helmet; sure, no one save with the eye of Mars, to threaten or command, and the front of Jove himself, could presume to don that shining casque, with its towering plume of blood-red horsehair. Look at those flashing bunches of bullion on his shoulders—Lambswool was in the Blues ere the vile Prussian tunic came in and epaulettes were abolished. Regard that glittering cuirass, and ponder on the undaunted heart which must be throbbing beneath. I entreat you to survey, finally, his sumptuous sash of mingled gold and crimson strands; the emblazoned housings of that sable charger, which neighs and paws and prances, ready at a moment's notice, I will be bound, to cry among the captains 'Ha, ha!' Then, look at the sheepskin adornments to the saddle; his gleaming gauntlets — gauntlets, being pipe-clayed, don't gleam, by the way; still, it is as well not to lose a

chance of invoking alliteration's artful aid—and, in particular, I adjure, I implore you to look upon his boots—Boots whose blackness the Ethiop might envy; for I suppose that black men think the most ebonised niggers the handsomest; boots, to give a superlative polish to which might have driven Warren to despair, and caused drops of emulative anguish to distil from the souls of Day and Martin. Can you not see, have you not seen, Captain Lambswool, or the contemporary types of the Lambswool race, under these gorgeous but somewhat overpowering circumstances? *I* have beheld him many a time and oft; and my heart, shivering with admiring awe, has descended into my civilian bluchers. Suppose the terrible being were to make a cut at me with his shining sabre! It might be only in fun, you know—the young giants must have their sports, and their favourite pastime at present is, I am given to understand, Polo—but what, I should like to know, are likely to be the feelings of a fly when the giant Hurlothrumbo's son and heir 'plays' with him; and what should I do, cloven from the crown to the chaps by one swashing blow from the Excalibur brandished by Captain Lambswool? Suppose he were to ride me down, where should I be? Where? Why, mashed under the hoofs of the terrible black charger with the flowing mane and tail, and the continually foaming bit. I should be lying trampled, squelched, and bleeding in the dust of the Mall; while, in the remote distance, Captain Hercules Lambswool still urged on his wild career as rapidly, at least, as the sober pace of the eight cream-coloured Hanoverians which drag—which *used* to drag, I mean—the state coach would permit him to urge it. And yet, at the very period when I was unable to look upon Captain Lambswool without shaking, I happened to be—having recently returned from Paris—on intimate terms with a live sous-lieutenant in the *Cent Gardes*. This affable Colossus, who far exceeded six feet in stature, but who was somewhat weak at the knees, would absolutely permit me to treat him to absinthe and three-sous cigars at the Café de Helder. Fancy such a liberty being taken by a civilian with Captain Lambswool! He would have annihilated the 'cad,' as crazy Edward Irving threatened to annihilate the pew-opener.

I am not at all certain in my mind but that Captain Hercules was as terrible-looking in plain clothes—'mufti' is, I believe, the correct term for civilian garments with gentlemen of his profession—as he was in full uniform, or in his splendid undress military garb; the blue frock with the abundant frogs and braiding; the forage-cap with the gold laudband, and the white waist-belt, with the sabre clattering at his spurred heels. He was the heaviest of heavy 'swells,' and consequently fearful to look upon, in his Poole-made surtout—Smalpage had not come to the front in those days—with a rose in his button-hole, an 'all-round' collar, and his wide check trousers with a broad stripe down each outside seam. I saw him once in a

'Noah's Ark coat'—a long, straight-skirted gaberdine, reaching well-nigh down to the heels, and which was popular for a brief period about the time of the battle of Inkermann. In that coat he looked like Shem—if you can imagine Shem with a long tawny moustache and his hair parted down the middle. He would wear a shooting-suit sometimes, rough and hairy, like a Scotch terrier's coat, and with buttons as large as cheeseplates. In evening dress even—the costume which in most cases obliterates a man's individuality for the nonce, and places a duke on the same level with a waiter—Lambswool was simply appalling. At balls he usually took up the position of a 'wall-flower.' He was too tremendous to join in anything less heroic than that Dance of the Heroes which Kaulbach has depicted in his *Homer in Griechenland*, and when he leant against a wall, calmly but superbly surveying the giddy whirling crowd, you could not help recalling that one of his names was Samson, and auguring shudderingly that in a minute or so he would pull down Willis's Rooms on the heads of the Philistine host bodily.

And yet he was not, in the main, half a bad fellow, for all his six feet two, his big blonde moustaches, and his generally overwhelming mien. Let it be first borne in mind that he was to all intents and purposes a 'swell' of the swells. Poor Felix Whitehurst, who is dead, and was the best-abused man of his time—I can't help fancying that he was rather glad, poor fellow, to know that he was going to a land where there was neither *Pall Mall Gazette* nor *Saturday Review*—used to divide the august race to which Lambswool belonged into three species:—Heavy Swells, Howling Swells, and Shady Swells. The Duke of Doncaster—everybody knows him, from M. Pellegrini's portrait—is a 'Heavy Swell.' He drives the twice-a-week coach to Coldwaltham in the season, the Duchess sometimes taking the box-seat. He owns a Scotch county and a half; and he owes thirty thousand pounds to his tailor. If he be not the heaviest of swells, I should like to know who can lay claim to that proud appellation. As a type of a Howling Swell, I cannot choose a better specimen than Captain Fitz Firefly, of the Twenty-fourth Hussars, who drives, hunts, fishes, rides steeplechases, backs up penniless managers when they open theatres with 'plenty of leg' in the burlesques; is as well known at Newmarket as at the Bedford at Brighton, and at the Café Anglais in Paris as at the Junior Plungers' and Bangup's Billiard Club in Pall Mall. He plays deeply; his betting books, were they all collected, would fill a shelf as long as that devoted, in the Museum Reading-Room, to the Pantheon Littéraire; he is on friendly terms with several distinguished prizefighters; in the days of public executions at the Old Bailey he was always ready to make one to hire the first-floor front of the King of Denmark tavern; he has been twice summoned for cock-fighting; it required all the influence of his uncle, the bishop, to

dissuade the Bumbleshire magistrate from sending him to the treadmill for beating the county constabulary at a race-meeting; he pays —at least he owes—for all Miss Fillybuster's pug-dogs, sealskin jackets, diamond bracelets, and piebald ponies; and he is a member of the 'Rum. Pum. Pa.' As for the Shady Swell, he can be very easily and briefly defined. He is Captain Ossidew (once a captain always a captain); but his commission was sold, and the proceeds 'melted' long ago—*late* of the Twenty-fourth Hussars. You may see him swaggering down the Burlington Arcade arm-in-arm with Major Cockshy, late of the Venezuelan Caçadores, and Fred Friskertill, late manager of the Royal Deficit Bank Limited. This is he, in smirched buckskin gloves—what a bill he had once at Ludlam's! —with patched boots, and an electro-gilt horse-shoe pin in his frayed scarf, sucking the butt of a cheap cigar, and ogling the girls in the bonnet-shops. This is he, in a shabby straw hat and a reefer jacket, white at the seams, and with a battered telescope under his arm, loafing on the pier at Ryde in the yachting season, and pretending that he is looking out for Jack Galesby, of the Andromeda. That may be; but Jack, otherwise the Right Honourable Viscount Galesby, is certainly not looking out for Captain Ossidew, *late* of the Twenty-fourth Hussars; and did he catch sight of that scapegrace would give him the cut direct. The Shady Swell is very well known in west-end bill-discounters' dens, and in the board-rooms of bubble companies. He always carries a pack of cards and a set of dice in his travelling-bag; he shuts his eyes, or pulls up the collar of his coat, when a cab bears him past Trimmer's Hotel, lest William the waiter, of whom he has borrowed enough money to set that poor fellow up in the greengrocery line, should espy him; and in sporting circles there runs a rumour that not later than last July, and at Diddlesbury races, Captain Ossidew, late of the Twenty-fourth Hussars, was ducked as a 'Welcher.'

My own belief is that, in addition to the three types of swelldom just enumerated, there is another, the Awful Swell—the Lambswool Swell, in fine. Of shadiness there was not in his character one iota; but he was a little too dissipated to be styled, with strict propriety, 'Heavy.' The modern Heavy Swell goes in early for politics and the Commission of the Peace, writes letters to the papers about the Game Laws and the Incidence of Taxation, and is sometimes a member of the School Board. He was given, was Lambswool, so report said, to divers decidedly 'tearing' practices; but, if he tore, it was always in an awful manner. 'He is a wicked, wicked young man, my dear,' old Lady Frumpleby (his aunt, indeed) was wont to say to her three daughters. 'But he has charming manners, mamma,' Lady Fanny Frumpleby would plead. 'He is very good-looking,' Lady Mildred (a giddy, thoughtless thing) would giggle. 'He is so delightfully naughty,' Lady Eva would murmur. Wherein

lay his wickedness? Whispers on the subject were many; but certainties were few. He had one of the neatest turn-outs in the way of a dark-green cabriolet, one of the largest thoroughbred cab horses, and one of the smallest tigers, in buckskins and topboots, to hang on behind, ever beheld; and there is no denying that, with the reins in his hand, and with one of Carrera's eighteenpenny regalias between his lips, he looked delightfully, but still awfully, wicked. His sealskin cigar-case; his lapiz-lazuli fusee-box; his betting-book bound in malachite; the shawl-pattern dressing-gown and scarlet morocco slippers he wore in chambers; the ragged Dandie Dinmont that trotted at his heels; the Chubb-locked photograph album which reposed on his bedroom table; the picture in the Florentine frame, but closely veiled with a green-silk curtain, which hung over his bed-head—all these things were looked upon, somehow, as elements in his wickedness. Give a dog a bad name—the proverb is somewhat musty. 'He is the soul of honour, mamma,' his cousin and stanch ally, Lady Fanny Frumpleby, would cry. '*Mauvais sujets* of his description generally are,' the old lady would cynically reply. Brutus was an honourable man; so was the Maréchal de Richelieu. 'How is it that his name never gets into the papers?' Sir Benjamin Backbite would sometimes charitably inquire. 'It's always hushed up; it must be hushed up,' that truly Christian woman, Mrs. Candour, would suggest. 'He'll be found out some day; that's one consolation.' Thus Lady Sneerwell, and thus, my brothers and sisters, they are talking about *you* at this very moment. My dear Mrs. Bountiful, you spent the whole of this afternoon at home, trimming a bonnet, in sheer kindness of heart, for your housemaid; but Mrs. Candour has told half a hundred people in Belgravia that at 2.30 P.M. you were seen at the Victoria Station, Pimlico, entering a first-class compartment of a train bound for the Crystal Palace, and in the company of young Shunter, the son of the well-known millionaire manufacturer of rolling stock. My dear Mr. Intiger, when Sir Benjamin Backbite met you coming out of Marlborough-street Police-court the other morning, whither you had gone to prosecute an extortionate cabman, he rushed down to the club (the Senior Thersites) and told Mawworm, the *Saturday* Reviewer; and Blackbile, the retired Q.C.; and old Dr. Belladonna, the late Grand-Duke of Tartarus' body-physician, that you had been locked up all night on a charge of being drunk and disorderly, and had got off in the morning (under the name of Highlow Jinks, medical student) with a fine of forty shillings. Some nice people I knew once circulated a report that I had gone raving mad, and was under the care of Dr. Douchewell, at Isleworth, until steps could be taken to get me into St. Luke's. They were not very far from the truth at the time, these nice people, for I had been in excruciating torture for nine days with the toothache.

There are two hundred and fifty thousand lies told every minute

in London (I have the late Mr. Babbage's authority for this) about people's goings-on; and since the introduction of the post-card system the average is said to be rapidly increasing. If you tell your detractors they are Liars, they bring actions for libel against you.

Captain Hercules Lambswool allowed the world to lie its very hardest—or to tell the truth; who shall say? He continued to be solemnly and equably awful, and to enjoy the reputation of being dreadfully wicked. It brought him a kind of celebrity—shocking, if you will, but undeniably sensational. The Russian Princess, Anna Commena Doseimoff—her husband died in the Caucasus, in command of his regiment; but *les mauvaises langues* whispered that strychnine administered by mistake in a *petit verre* of Chartreuse *verte*, by his fond spouse, had a good deal to do with his premature decease, and who was reported to be the wickedest woman in Europe—was anxious to see the Captain. Sir Benjamin avows that he saw them together three Sundays afterwards on the lawn of the Castle Hotel, Richmond. It is very certain that Spancarati, the Princess's music-master, secretary, and Head of the Poison Closet (so Mrs. Candour hints), dedicated his 'Flowing Arno' waltzes to 'Monsieur Hercule Lambswool, Capitaine aux Gardes à cheval (Royal Horse-guards Blue) de sa Majesté, la Reine d'Angleterre. Sir Benjamin had met Spancarati coming out of Lambswool's chambers in the Albany, and at 4 P.M. that day (*teste* Lady Sneerwell) the captain himself was seen, in the Grand Avenue of Covent-garden Market, emerging from the shop of Mrs. Buck, the florist, and bearing in one buckskin-gloved palm a bouquet pinned up in blue-tissue paper, and as big as a prize cauliflower. Lady Sneerwell did not precisely hear the captain tell his coachman (he was in his brougham that day, not in his cab nor in his mail-phaeton) to drive to Eaton-place, the abode of the wicked countess; but her ladyship read the direction in his eyes.

Of course, one year, when he dropped his subscription to the omnibus box at Covent-garden, and took a stall at her Majesty's (the burnt-down one) instead, people said that the reason for his secession was the migration (through a squabble with the stage-manager) of Mademoiselle Gambanuda, the famous *danseuse*, from Bow-street to the Haymarket. Equally, of course, when Roger the Monk made a bad third instead of coming in a triumphant first at Goodwood, and it was commonly known at Tattersall's that Lambswool, who, in his calmly awful way, had backed the animal heavily, had lost fifteen thousand pounds, people said that he would never pay a farthing, and that on the eve of settling-day he would go off salmon-fishing to Norway. 'Fellows who plunged,' chuckled little Tom Sneak, in the smoking-room of the Ugly-Mug Club, 'must expect spills. I always thought that long-legged conceited jackanapes would come down a whopper.' Tom had a betting book of his own;

and he hedged so beautifully that he always told you that he 'stood on velvet,' and, come what might, stood to win three-hundred-and-fifty pounds sure; all of which did not enable him to pay his last losses, amounting to twenty-seven pounds two-and-sixpence, on the Chester Cup. He is at present residing at Monaco, and backs the red.

The people at Tattersall's—in whose yard not half so many lies are told as in what is ordinarily termed 'good society'—were, on the other hand, quite comfortable in their minds about the unlucky backer of Roger the Monk. 'The capting's good for more than double of what he put the pot on for,' Mr. Gumbles, a heavy creditor on the Goodwood score, observed to Josh Smoocher, an 'Ebrew Jew, who once kept a hazard bank, of the kind known as a 'Silver Hell,' at a coffee-shop in a back-slum of Soho, but who now runs horses and is thinking some day of going into Parliament. 'Good!' echoed Mr. Smoocher. 'He's good for forty thou. He ain't got a inch o' parchment on his esthates; and he's bound to come in to a lot more when the old lady dies. Bethides he don't sthpend eight 'underd a year on himself, and he's awful honourable.' Strange, that in one particular at least, Lady Fanny Frumpleby, that haughty beauty, and Mr. Jehoshaphat Smoocher, the betting man, should be of one mind.

The captain paid; and, oddly enough, did go salmon-fishing to Norway immediately afterwards. Then people said, of course, that he was fearfully shaken by his losses—that he was 'dipped,' heavily 'dipped,' my dear, and was mortgaging his patrimony right and left. Papillon, of the Coldstreams—Charley, otherwise 'Baby,' Papillon, one of the best-natured fellows about town—remarked to Lord McCraw, of the Scots Fusiliers, as the two stood together in the celebrated bow-window which overlooks Pall Mall, that he had heard poor old Lamb was 'short'—which is Guardsmanesque for that which civilians term being 'hard up'—and that, although he didn't, as a rule, like fellows in the Blues, he should be glad to lend the old fellow a 'thou' if he wanted it. Lord McCraw concurred with him, judiciously adding that Lambswool had 'fairish expaictancies.'

Lambswool's aunt died soon afterwards of a surfeit of green tea, hydrate of chloral, pâté de foie gras, and advanced ritualism at St. Celsus-on-Sea. She was the 'old lady' so touchingly alluded to by Mr. Jehoshaphat Smoocher in Tattersall's yard. Lambswool had been wealthy enough before; his father, the descendant of a long line of Yorkshire thanes, who had held their own for many generations before the coming of the Conqueror, and were, indeed, both astonished and indignant at the impudence of the Norman invader in coming over at all—Lambswool's papa, I say, a valiant Waterloo officer and K.C.B., had left our Hercules, his only son, a fair rent-roll, from which—that disastrous business of Roger the Monk notwithstanding—no snippings or clippings had been made to make mort-

gage-deeds withal. Lambswool's aunt, his father's sister, was the enormously rich Mrs. Huyghens, chief (albeit dormant) partner in the great Amsterdam house of Huyghens, Vanderboom, and Van Dam—that historical firm which has made so many millions by dealings in Dutch cheeses, European loans, quicksilver mines, curaçao, niggers, Dutch dolls, and other miscellaneous articles. It is unnecessary to particularise the precise augmentation of fortune accruing to Captain Lambswool by the decease of his Anglo-Batavian relative. Let it suffice to report verbatim a remark soon afterwards made by Mr. Gumble, meeting Mr. Jehoshaphat Smoocher, one sunny settling-day—Roger the Monk had come in first somewhere or another—that 'the old girl had cut up very beefy, and had left the capting a pot of money;' to which Mr. Smoocher replied that he wished he had half his (the captain's) complaint; and that if he thought of getting married, and wanted any diamonds, he (Mr. Smoocher) knew a party who could accommodate him in a brace of shakes.

Words of wisdom were these uttered by the wary betting men, albeit couched in words which Dr. Latham might scruple about admitting into his dictionary. It happened that the captain, a very few months after the death of Mrs. Huyghens, did begin to think about getting married, and that although the bounteous old lady left him plenty of jewelry, he wanted more diamonds. It must be regarded, I suppose, as a dispensation of Providence for the benefit of the Bond-street jewellers, that brides expectant are never satisfied with the trinkets of their great-grandmothers. Were it otherwise, how would the Bond-street jewellers live—to say nothing of their acquiring gigantic fortunes, and purchasing magnificent estates in the Midland counties—I should like to know?

Captain Lambswool made a distinguished although not an aristocratic match. He married Georgiana, eldest daughter of Mr. Trolley, M.P., that famous and wealthy engineer and contractor, to whom modern civilisation is indebted for the Squanderbury and Lavisham branch of the Grand Trunk Railway from Basinghall-street to Babylon. It has been calculated by an eminent statistician that nine hundred and seven beneficed clergymen were seriously involved; that fourteen hundred and twelve widows, with a small independence, were reduced to poverty and compelled to let out lodgings or to take in washing; that four hundred and fifty-three retired officers of the army and navy were forced to sell their half-pay; that two thousand highly-accomplished young ladies were fain to go out as governesses; and that ten per cent of the aggregate of sufferers cut their throats, drowned themselves in the Regent's Canal, or became inmates of Hanwell and Colney-Hatch Lunatic Asylums, solely in consequence of the Squanderbury and Lavisham branch of the Babylon and Basinghall-street line, in which they

were original shareholders. Civilisation, I need scarcely say, benefited splendidly by the undertaking, as it has likewise done by the Atchinese Irrigation Works, the Great Desert of Sahara Oasis Company, the Sea-Coast of Bohemia Breakwater and Lighthouse Company, the Wandsworth Pond Whalefishing Adventure, and the Association for erecting Grand Hotels at Samarcand, East Grinstead, and Pulo-Penang. In all of these undertakings Mr. Trolley, M.P., had a share, and from each he withdrew a very comfortable number of thousands of pounds—the original shareholders being, like Lord Ullin in the ballad, 'left lamenting.' It is fitting, nay, inevitable, that the few should be sacrificed for the benefit of the many. Let it be your constant endeavour, my Young Friend, to find yourself in the majority.

I deeply regret to record that the union of Captain Lambswool —he sold out on his marriage, but courtesy will continue to give him his military title—with Miss Trolley was not a happy one. It cannot precisely be said that the bride and bridegroom began to quarrel almost as soon as the nuptial knot was tied, because it takes two parties to make a quarrel, and Lambswool was the most placable and indulgent of husbands; still, it seems undeniable that ere the honeymoon was over, Mrs. Lambswool had been thrice in hysterics; and before they had been married six months, Sir Benjamin Backbite was ready to make an affidavit that Mrs. L. had thrown a teacup at her lord in a private room at the Grand Hotel, Paris; and that in the brougham which was conveying the happy pair to the Duchess of Diachylon's ball, in the season of 18—, the adored one of Lambswool's heart had twisted her jewelled fingers in his white neckcloth and manifested a burning desire to choke him; and that Lambswool had privately and mysteriously asked Mr. Buddlecombe, of Bolus and Bubblecombe, the eminent chemists and druggists of South Kensington, whether a tall lady dressed in black and closely veiled had been purchasing any of Batley's Solution of Opium at their establishment lately. As for Lady Sneerwell, she went about town with a circumstantial and detailed account of Mrs. Lambswool, at 11.30 one night, after a dinner-party which her husband had given in honour of the appointment of his friend, Sir Xerxes Timmins, K.C.B., to the Governorship of the Cruel Islands, putting on her bonnet and shawl, and packing up her jewelry, a Maltese lace veil, and two Dresden china pug-dogs in a sealskin bag, with the avowed intention of going home to her mother.

For a wonder, the backbiters were this time not wholly drawing on imagination for their facts. I discard the Batley's Solution of Opium story, but as for the rest I gravely fear that the bill of indictment must be a true one. There had been fearful goings-on at the gorgeous mansion in Bucephalus-gardens, S.W., where the Lambswools resided. Dark rumours were current among the ser-

vants as to master's 'carryings-on,' but what he carried and how he carried it nobody seemed precisely to know. Still it was agreed on all hands that he was wickeder than ever, and that Mrs. Lambswool was a 'suffering angel.' I have known a good many suffering angels in my time. One of them bit me in the hand rather badly; but then she was an angel with very highly-strung nerves, and could not bear the least excitement.

The end of it all was a judicial separation; and the general conduct of Lambswool (the minutest details of his private life were not spared, I can assure you) formed the text for a good many leading articles of the description known as 'spicy' in the penny papers. He went abroad after the termination of that ugly business in the Court for Divorce and Matrimonial Causes, and Lady Sneerwell, Mrs. Candour, Sir Benjamin Backbite, and the rest are unanimous in stating that the Captain (who has of course sold out from the Blues) is living at Damascus, where he dresses *à la Turque*, and entertains a whole seraglio full of moon-faced houris. Is it all true, I wonder, or a lie? *Quien sabe?* I am yet constrained to remember that when the Reverend Nepomucene Chrysostom, so long the deservedly popular incumbent of St. Philidor-the-Martyr, South Albertopolis, preached his farewell sermon on being appointed to the Missionary Bishopric of the Cruel Islands, he dwelt with affectionate eloquence on the long and valuable services rendered to him as a lay-helper in parish work by Captain Lambswool. He knew, he said, for a certainty, that the Captain habitually gave away at least half of his income in charity, and that nearly every moment he could spare from his military duties was devoted to the sedulous discharge of his labours as a district visitor. But Lady Sneerwell, Mrs. Candour, Sir Benjamin Backbite, and the rest were not to be convinced against their will, and, as regards that poor dear Captain Lambswool's wickedness, are of the same opinion still.

THE TWO INQUESTS

IN TWO PARTS

PART I.

'COMING EVENTS CAST THEIR SHADOWS BEFORE.'

CHAPTER I. FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

IT was in the late autumn (October 1845) that I came to my new home at Overton. Our house was near the outskirts of the town; and I wondered, on arriving, that my husband, as doctor of the union, and having, as he had told me, an extensive practice in the neighbourhood, should have selected so lonely a spot for his dwelling-place. Overton was a second-rate town, with no particular manufacture, and an absence of life or movement, except on Friday, the only stirring day of the week, when the stock farmers of the neighbourhood congregated at the Bull Inn to discuss market prices and the weather; whilst the lowing of oxen, bleating of sheep, and grunting of pigs broke the silence of the usually dull and deserted market-place.

There was little to interest the eye or ear in Overton: ill-paved, ill-lighted, with shabby shops, and an air of decay about the houses and of languor about the inhabitants which could hardly fail to strike a stranger passing through the town, and, of course, made a deeper impression upon me, looking upon it as my home.

I had met my husband at a long distance from Overton, at a seaside watering-place, full of gaiety and life, where he had been spending his brief summer holidays; and we had been thrown together as people generally are in those places—meeting on the beach in the morning, riding on the downs in the afternoon, and dancing at the Assembly Rooms in the evening. In less than two months after our first acquaintance I had become Dr. Connor's wife.

I shall not mention any circumstances connected with my own family, as they are unimportant in their bearing upon my dark story. This only I shall state, that my marriage was looked on coldly by my nearest relations; and that a feeling of wounded pride led me to drop all correspondence with them, and to determine to rely for my sources of happiness on my husband and home.

Let me recall the evening of my arrival at Overton, after three happy weeks on the Continent. It was in the thickening twilight of an October evening that my husband handed me out of the train at the Overton station; a man-servant was waiting for us on the

platform, and at the first glimpse I was conscious of a feeling of dislike and depression, arising from the anxious look that he fixed upon me, and as I turned to avoid his gaze I found that my husband was also regarding me with a strange look of inquiry.

'You have not returned Simon's greeting,' said he; 'he is an old and trustworthy servant, and will do his best to please his young mistress.'

The man gave a wintry smile, that only seemed to make his face more inscrutable, and turned away to collect my boxes, which were soon packed upon the jangling fly. Simon mounted the box by the driver, and we were jolted down the muddy road and over the rough streets of Overton. A sharp turn brought us into the market-place, now lighted by a few dim oil lamps. The creaking signs of the two inns kept up a dismal duet in the foggy evening air.

A larger and brighter lamp was burning before the only respectable and cheerful-looking house in the market-place. A smartly-painted door and six upper windows led me to think that this must be our house, and I turned to my husband to ask him if it was so.

'No,' said he; 'our house is not exactly in Overton, but stands about half a mile off on the Ambledon-road; this is Lawyer Piggott's, one of our magnates in this small place.'

The fly rattled on, leaving the better streets and coming into a region of squalid cottages, interrupted by spaces of ill-cultivated garden-ground.

Soon the cottages ceased altogether, and about a quarter of a mile farther we pulled up before a tall brick house, with iron railings on each side of it, and a flight of stone steps up to the door. The windows were dark, and no light of welcome brightened the aspect of this place. Simon got down and rang violently at the bell, and my husband looked annoyed at the tardiness of the woman, who at length opened it.

'Didn't you get my letter, Mrs. Judson?' he asked angrily, as we entered the passage.

'Yes, sir,' said the woman, curtsying, and, as I thought, looking at me narrowly from head to foot; 'everything is ready for Mrs. Connor.'

It seemed to me that she laid a particular emphasis on my name. She held a candle in her hand inviting me to follow her up-stairs, whilst my husband opened the door of a well-lighted parlour, in which I could see that the cloth was laid for dinner. I followed Mrs. Judson, and was agreeably surprised to find how much happier and brighter it was inside than I had been led to expect from the exterior.

There were two windows in the bedroom, and on raising the blind I found that they looked on the long garden at the back of the house.

George Kirby, del. Edmund Evans, s

A RELIC OF THE PAST.

'This is a back room, ma'am,' said the woman, 'but master ordered it to be prepared; and indeed at this time of the year it's far more pleasant than the front one, and I may say that nearly all the best living rooms look this way.'

'It can't be a very large house,' said I, as I began to take off my bonnet and cloak.

'Well, ma'am, 'tis larger than you'd think, I daresay; and though certainly 'tis lonely, 'tis also very convenient.'

She spoke kindly, but did not relax her scrutiny; still I thought this natural, so taking a look round the room, recognising some engravings of pictures I had admired abroad, and nicely bound copies of most of my favourite poets, I ran down-stairs to thank my husband for these little proofs of his watchful love.

I looked for him in vain in the lighted parlour, and being impatient to tell him of my delight, I crossed the passage, and pushing open a door opposite the dining-room, found myself in what was evidently the dispensary. This, too, was empty, but a ray of light found its way through an imperfectly-closed door on the other side of the room; I gently opened it, and saw my husband standing with his back towards me, looking into the half-open drawer of an old-fashioned bureau, which appeared the only piece of furniture in the room. Within it I caught a glimpse of something white and gauzy, like a woman's veil. A strange thrill even then crept through me as I stood, not venturing to draw nearer, though my curiosity was at once aroused. It was a narrow closet-like room, with no fire-place; and seemed by its damp darkness to swallow up the rays of the candle which stood by my husband's side. He turned suddenly as my dress rustled against the door, closed the drawer hastily, and advanced towards me with an agitated and eager manner, uttering an exclamation of alarm; then with a rapid change:

'Why, Georgie, how did you find your way into this dark hole? Come, my love,' said he kindly, 'back into life and warmth and light. Doctor's wives are never allowed to penetrate into the mysteries of the dispensary amongst poisons and horrid instruments.'

Did his voice tremble as he said poisons? or was it my imagination? It was not until we got back into the light and warmth again that I noticed how pale and wan my husband's face had become; and the evening passed and turned into night ere the troubled expression faded out of his dark melancholy eyes.

Chapter II.

MRS. PIGGOTT.

The occupations of a young wife in settling down in a new home are always sufficient to employ her thoughts and time. I had therefore but little leisure at first to indulge in surmises or specula-

tions on many points, which gradually began to raise questions and doubts within me: now and then indeed—even during the first week—after our return home I wondered whether my husband's position was sufficiently established to admit of my being treated as an equal by the squires' families amongst whom he visited as medical man.

No cards as yet graced the china basin on my writing-table. I had decorated the room, which I called my drawing-room, with the usual pride of a young married woman. The coloured Bohemian glass, the Sèvres inkstand, the French clock, and all the pretty appurtenances of a newly-furnished apartment, had been arranged and rearranged, but as yet no eyes had admired them but my own. My morning hours were spent in reading, playing over my husband's favourite songs, and settling my household affairs with Mrs. Judson. In the afternoon I paced the garden, for as yet I had not summoned up courage to face the town by myself. My husband generally left home at half-past nine, and I seldom saw him again until our dinner hour at six, though I frequently waited for him till seven. From this I judged that his practice must be extensive, and that he probably rested somewhere in the middle of the day, as I hardly deemed it possible for one horse to take him over so many miles without respite; but I had a certain kind of timidity which I thought becoming in the wife of a professional man, and therefore never asked him questions as to the houses he visited, but accepted any little scraps of talk which he vouchsafed as pure acts of grace on his part. Mingled with my strong admiration and love I had a curious feeling of hesitation in seeking any light on his past life and associations.

His conversation seldom turned upon every-day incidents, but was rather drawn from the many sources of information and original thought in his own richly-gifted mind. He frequently would read me papers of an essay-like kind which he had written on abstract subjects. The evenings were always full of pleasant intercourse, though we never seemed to enter that inner region of confidence which is the great blessedness of happy married life.

At length one solitary card appeared in my basket. I was sitting alone as usual about three o'clock in the afternoon, tired of my monotonous employments, and counting the hours till my husband's return, when a ring at the front door made me start nervously; it was the first time I had heard the bell of my own house since the night of my arrival. At this slight but unusual sound, a presentiment that it was the note of warning of evil to come rushed through my mind. I laid down my work, and looked towards the door in anxious expectation. I was disappointed, however, for Mrs. Judson's face alone appeared with a card in her hand, which she handed to me; it was black edged, with 'Mrs. Piggott' inscribed

upon it. I was too glad of an opportunity of exchanging a few sentences with Judson, who went through all her duties with perfect regularity and cleanliness, but more as if she was moved by clock-work than by the instincts of a human being.

'Is this the old lady,' I asked, 'whom I have seen at church in Lawyer Piggott's pew?'

'Yes, ma'am; it is the lawyer's mother. She's an excellent lady, and I am afraid she's overwalked herself coming this distance; it's an uncommon thing to see Mrs. Piggott so far from home.'

'Then run after her, and beg her to come in and rest herself.'

'I don't think it'll be of much use, ma'am,' said Mrs. Judson; 'and she's too far back by this time.'

'Pray go!' I repeated. 'I cannot bear the thoughts of this old lady walking so far without resting. I must go myself,' I said, rising, 'if you dislike the trouble.'

'It's not the trouble, ma'am,' said she quietly; 'I'll do as you tell me;' and immediately ran down the steps into the road.

I followed her, and stood at the door watching my first visitor with some curiosity. She had gone some paces, and was walking with the feeble gait of advanced years. She turned on hearing footsteps behind her, and showed a face of shrewd kindliness; her hair was very white, while her eyes were dark and bright, which gave her face a very penetrating and keen expression.

'My mistress hopes you'll walk in, Mrs. Piggott,' said Judson; 'she's sorry you should have walked so far.'

'My compliments to your mistress,' said the lawyer's mother—and her voice sounded very distinct in the wintry air—'but I should prefer receiving her at my own house, and I'm not at all too tired to walk home at once. Tell her, if you please, I am obliged to her for her politeness, and hope soon to see her.'

As she finished speaking she caught my eye, and curtsied with the formality of the old school. I returned her greeting, and went back to the fireside meditating on this little incident. Why was it that I scrupled to tell my husband of this visit? I looked at the card, and debated whether I should leave it in the card-basket or put it in my writing-case. I had a sort of feeling that if my husband saw it he would forbid me to return the visit. He had already spoken of Lawyer Piggott in a disparaging sort of way, and had usually discouraged my going into Overton on any pretext, except to church on Sunday.

Five o'clock struck, and I went up-stairs to change my dress; before my toilet was over I heard my husband's voice in the passage. I instantly remembered I had left the card in the basket, and that he would see it without any preface from me. I listened, wondering whether he would ask Mrs. Judson for an explanation of it, and heard a whispered inquiry and answer in an equally low tone from

her. I could not discover if it was a tone of vexation or approval; but I hastily finished dressing and ran down to my husband, determining to express to him the pleasure I felt at the thought of making an acquaintance at last.

He was looking thoughtfully at the card as I entered the room.

'Have you seen Mrs. Piggott, my dear?' he asked at once.

'I can hardly call it seeing her, Robert, for she would not come in. I was very sorry that she refused my offer of rest and refreshment, though I sent Judson after her; it was so very kind of her to come so far to call on me, and I hope you'll let me return her visit. I like her face,' I added, 'and have always wished to know her since I saw her at church.'

He still stood looking musingly at the card, and presently said, in a kind tone of voice,

'Poor child! It's natural you should wish for a friend, and I'd rather you had Mrs. Piggott for one than any one else about here.'

'Thank you, Robert; and you'll come with me, won't you?'

His countenance fell.

'No, Georgie, I have no time for visits except those of duty. I have long ago ceased to pay calls, and my presence will not be expected by Mrs. Piggott; you will be more welcome alone.'

He dropped the subject, and it seemed as if, notwithstanding his praise of the lady, there was a tacit understanding between us that enough had been said about her.

Chapter III.

OVERTON CHURCHYARD.

It was on a Saturday that Mrs. Piggott had called, and I looked forward with pleasure to exchanging a greeting with her on Sunday, and was therefore proportionately disappointed when an obstinately rainy day seemed to shut out all hopes of reaching church. My husband made no difference in his prolonged absences on the Sundays; they were evidently no rest days to him; and I had hinted more than once how much I wished that he would manage to accompany me at least to one of the services.

Generally he would reply to any observation of this sort with a very tender expression, partaking almost of pity; would smooth my hair with his hand, and say, 'Poor little woman! There are many ways of serving God without going to church. The duties of a medical man are not the least among them.' With these kind of excuses my husband would silence me for the time; indeed, he had a peculiar art in turning from any subject on which we were likely to differ. Accordingly, on this particular Sunday I saw him depart soon after breakfast, and prepared to pass the morning as well as my now-constantly-recurring feelings of uneasiness would allow me.

After reading for a while, I rose and looked out of the window, and, to my great satisfaction, noticed that the clouds were breaking, the rain falling less heavily, and a struggling gleam in the distance led me to hope for a fine afternoon. I had an unaccountable desire to reach Overton Church that day, and long before I need have set out for the afternoon service, I had put on my waterproof and was splashing along the wet road. The streets of the town were more than ever repellent on that November afternoon. I scarcely met a human being as I passed along. A few lads were lounging against the iron railings of the churchyard, who stared at me as I came up to them, and as I passed into the porch one of them said to me, 'Church doors a'n't open; bells a'n't begun yet.' I thanked him, and walked round into the churchyard, which was one of the old-fashioned kind, crowded, neglected, ill-kept, and full of monuments of more than usual ugliness. One end seemed reserved for the poorer classes, as the graves were distinguished by no headstones. One there was, however, which I noticed had a plain flat stone let into the turf, and towards this I walked slowly, and read the words:

'AMY CONNOR, died December 17th, 1844.'

This was all that was upon the stone! It must have been some near relative of my husband's, for I had heard of no other Connors in the neighbourhood. Why had he never mentioned to me her loss? Why never even named her to me? She could not have been dead a year when I came to Overton. Now again sprang up an earnest desire to see Mrs. Piggott, and learn from her something of my husband's former circumstances; everything as yet was so vague and shadowy in my own heart, that I dared not examine its growing doubts. I was but nineteen, and more inexperienced than women are nowadays at that age; had I been wiser and older I should have hesitated before I sought from a stranger the elucidation of my perplexity. While I stood still gazing at the stone, the bells began to chime, and stragglers to enter the churchyard.

I resolved to wait till I saw Mrs. Piggott, and then to follow and seat myself near her in church. She came at length, leaning on the arm of a tall gentlemanlike man, in whose face I could see enough of the mother reflected to be convinced that it was no other than her son, Lawyer Piggott, of whom I had already heard. His eyes seemed to take in in an instant every one in the churchyard; and I was conscious that his look rested on me for a moment with a surprised expression. Mrs. Piggott bowed to me, and he raised his hat, and they passed into the church. I followed up the aisle and entered the pew immediately behind them, which was fortunately tenantless. I fear I was far more occupied with the lawyer and his mother during service than with what was going on around me. My attention was suddenly diverted by the pelting of the rain

against the windows, and the howling of the wind, which seemed momentarily to rise into greater violence. I noticed Mrs. Piggott lean towards her son and whisper something, to which he nodded gravely; and when the sermon was over, and we were preparing to leave the church, he came forward and said:

'My mother is anxious you should take shelter in our house, Mrs. Connor, until this storm is over.'

I was too glad to accept the invitation. Here at once, I thought, is an opportunity of satisfying my curiosity. I refused the lawyer's proffered arm, and begged Mrs. Piggott to go on with her son, while I followed. The church stood in the market-place, so we had only to cross this to reach their house. The old lady took my hand as we entered the hall, and said:

'Welcome, Mrs. Connor; I have wished much to see you here.'

A broad staircase led us up into a long and comfortable room, which looked half library, half drawing-room, and in which traces of the son's occupation were noticeable. Mrs. Piggott drew two arm-chairs up to the fire, and turning to her son, said, with a smile:

'I daresay Mrs. Connor will excuse you, Archie; so if you will send us up some tea, I will try and keep her,' turning kindly to me, 'till the storm is over.'

I was won by the kindness of the old lady, and seated myself by the fire, with a suppressed eagerness on finding myself embarked in what might prove a confidential conversation with Mrs. Piggott.

'I'm afraid, my dear, you must find it lonely?' she said in a motherly tone.

'Very lonely,' I replied; 'but I hope my husband will take me into the country when the weather is finer, for as yet I have seen nothing of the neighbourhood.'

'Have you no visitors, then?'

'Not a single card has been left on me since I came, except yours.'

Mrs. Piggott mused a little; then:

'Has not Dr. Connor taken you to Carwithen Castle, and introduced you to his great friend, Lord Carwithen?'

'No,' I replied. 'Is it near enough for a drive? I thought it was the other side of the county.'

'It is but nine miles from your house, and your husband is frequently with him; no doubt you will soon know him. But you have an excellent companion in Dr. Connor; he is a man of such varied information.'

'Yes,' I said, with a half sigh; 'but I am so much younger and inexperienced, that I am not the companion to him that I ought to be; but he's very, very kind.'

'Well, I'm glad,' said she, 'that there's a lady at the Moor House once more.'

I caught at the words 'once more.'

'Did you know,' I asked, 'the Amy Connor whose grave I saw for the first time this afternoon?'

Her kind face clouded over as she answered, 'Yes. I knew her as much as any one could know a being so unfortunate.'

'Why so unfortunate?' I said, my curiosity and anxiety increasing.

'My dear, is it possible you have never heard of your husband's only sister, and of her melancholy history?'

'Never!' I exclaimed. 'I did not even know that he had a sister.'

More than a minute passed before Mrs. Piggott spoke again, as if taking counsel with herself.

'I fear I have not been wise,' she said at last, 'in thus talking, as Dr. Connor has not mentioned the subject to you himself.'

'O, I am sure he will tell me all about it,' I cried; 'but if it is a painful story, that has been reason enough for his concealing it from me. Pray tell me all, Mrs. Piggott.'

We were interrupted by the entrance of the servant with tea, and the three cups showed that the lawyer meant to join us. I was sorry to think we were to be interrupted, for my anxiety was growing stronger every moment.

'I think I must ask Archie's advice,' said the cautious old lady, and rising she suddenly left the room.

I began to ask myself, in her brief absence, whether I was right in seeking from a stranger's lips the information on a piece of family history which my husband had thought fit to withhold from me; but I felt the opportunity might not occur again, and I could not bear to return home unenlightened. Mr. Piggott came back with his mother in a few moments, and seating himself near me said, with a grave but kindly manner:

'My mother tells me, Mrs. Connor, that you have never heard any of the circumstances connected with your husband's sister. I do not think it would be right that I, a perfect stranger, should make so painful a communication to you. I feel it would be better for your peace of mind that you should at once seek for information from Dr. Connor, and not risk the first hearing of so sad a story from persons who might be less disposed to feel for you than we are.'

I trembled as he spoke. An air of sternness had been apparent as he mentioned my husband's name; and I felt that I dared not make a farther inquiry. My heart beat with an indignant sense that this man blamed and distrusted my husband. I rose hastily, tied my cloak, and prepared to depart, feeling much more friendless than when I had entered the house. Mrs. Piggott stayed me.

'My dear young lady,' she said, in a sweet and pitying tone,

'Archie is right; only Dr. Connor's lips should tell you of the past. He has had some good reason, doubt not, for keeping it from you. Open your heart to him; he must need comfort more than you or we can tell. Let it be your mission to give it him. Be his consoler. A wife's tenderness is the best balm for such wounds as his. If he will allow us to be your friends, come to us again, and we will then, if he approves, tell you all that we know of the past sorrow; but it must only be by Dr. Connor's permission and express sanction.'

She drew me towards her and kissed my cheek, which was burning with mingled feelings. Mr. Piggott attended me in stiff silence to the door, bowed formally, and allowed me to depart without a single reassuring word. And so ended the visit I had longed for, and I took my way home through the wintry twilight with a sinking and heavy heart.

Chapter IV.

A REVELATION.

My mind was lost in a sea of conjecture, as I sat by the fire awaiting my husband's return on that dim November evening. Questionings, doubts, and surmises were thronging on me into which I dared not examine. Why had my husband never spoken to me of his sister? Why had Mrs. Judson never alluded to or mentioned her death, which must have taken place in this very house only eleven months ago? I remembered, with a shudder, that start of horror when I surprised my husband in the little room beyond the dispensary on the first night of my arrival at Overton.

'Why,' I asked myself, 'did Robert never allude to the names of any friends or neighbours, or hint at my finding associates in the ladies of the neighbourhood? Where did he spend all the long winter afternoons? Surely he could not be always engaged in visiting the sick! Why did he never return to the house by the same road he left it? Why was the front room adjoining my own always kept locked, and never entered, to my knowledge, even by Mrs. Judson?'

As I pondered over these and many even darker suspicions, I felt a growing reluctance to ask him about the past, and yet a curiosity which I knew would impel me to make inquiries in some other direction. This mixed feeling deepened as the time drew nigh for his return, and I listened nervously for the swinging of the gate that opened on the common, by the sound of which I generally knew of his arrival. It had always been my habit to rise and welcome him in the passage—greeting him with a wife's kiss; but this evening I was chained to the chair, and sat still, trying to suppress my agitation and to appear calm and natural. I had forgotten, till he entered the room, that I still wore my bonnet and cloak, and that he would remark on this unusual disregard of my evening change of dress.

'Little wife,' he said as he came in, 'have you forgotten that you have a husband to welcome?'

He came forward into the firelight as he spoke, and I rose to meet him.

'Why, your hair is quite damp,' he said, as he smoothed my curls back from my face; 'where have you been so late?'

I felt my colour rising as I answered, 'I have been to church.'

'Church!' he repeated, looking at the clock on the mantelpiece, the hand of which pointed to a quarter to seven; 'why, your service must have been a very long one, or you must have been very imprudent, sitting here till so late in your wet things!'

I was growing more and more uncomfortable. I hesitated, and then stammered out, 'I returned Mrs. Piggott's visit after church.'

Something in my manner made him look at me more narrowly. 'What is the matter, Georgie?' he said.

'Why, Robert, I think I must have caught cold; and this damp dark evening makes me feel quite wretched.'

'This is the last time, then,' he said, 'that you must go to church in the afternoon during the winter.'

Then, suddenly changing his tone to one of stern inquiry, 'I have a perfect reliance on your truthfulness, and I require you to tell me on what subject Mrs. Piggott has been talking?'

I attempted to answer, but broke down, and began sobbing violently. He sat down and drew me gently towards him.

'Be calm, Georgie. Shall I guess what you have heard this evening?'

'Forgive me,' I cried, 'if I have done wrong. I have been tempted to ask questions about your poor little sister, but I have not heard anything but that you lost her, and that she was unfortunate. I am so very, very sorry for you, my Robert. Will you not let your little wife try and comfort you? Will you not confide in me?'

The clock ticked on; the room was very silent. I could feel my husband's heart beating as I stood up and put my arm into his. His voice sounded thick and husky when he next spoke.

'There are some sorrows so very dark that even love cannot lighten them. I am not angry with you, but you must tell me all. What led you to ask questions as to the past? I do not think Mrs. Piggott would have volunteered the information.'

I shivered as I said, 'I saw her name on a grave in the churchyard.'

He struck his hand against his forehead as he murmured some indistinct words; then, relaxing his arm, he turned from me, bidding me go and change my dress; and as I reached the door he added, 'I will try and let you know something of the miserable past, since you wish it; but it will be a heavy burden for your poor

little heart. I would fain have kept it from you. You have drawn it on yourself, and I cannot help you to bear it; for—'

Here he broke off, laid his head down on his folded arms on the mantelpiece, and groaned heavily. I left the room in frightened silence, and tried, during the short interval till we met at dinner, to restore myself to my natural demeanour. The meal passed without any conversation between us. My husband was absorbed during the whole of the dinner, and seemed to pay attention to what was going on with difficulty. Simon stood behind his master, and looked as if he were keeping a silent watch on Robert. At length he left the room, and we were alone. My husband sat still at the table, leaning his head on his arm and shading his eyes from the lamp. At last, breaking the silence, which had grown oppressive, he said,

'Will you tell me, as briefly as possible, all that you have heard of my'—he stopped—'of Amy's death this evening?'

I trembled, but knowing how he disliked outward signs of nervous weakness, I repeated word for word Mrs. Piggott's replies to my questions. When I came to her leaving the room to seek her son, he held his breath and looked up fiercely. I went on, and with a faltering voice mentioned Mr. Piggott's refusal to tell me any particulars, and his injunction to ask my husband, and him only, for the history of his sister and her sorrowful end. He rose and began to pace the room with an impatient and angry air, his usual sign of annoyance or disquietude. I sat still, grieved and frightened; for though I was a mere girl, I quite understood how galling it must be to his pride for one of his own sex to have thus spoken of him to me. His face grew darker, more suspicious, more wretched. He continued to pace backwards and forwards, uttering expressions of dislike and contempt, which I felt must be levelled at the lawyer.

'Meddling hypocrite!' he said at last. 'Couldn't he have left me this one comfort in my blighted life? How dared he speak thus to my wife!'

'Robert,' I said, 'he never blamed you; he only counselled me to ask for your confidence—'

He broke in: 'I cannot discuss this subject to-night. Give me time to collect myself. I am too hurt and grieved to talk more to you now. I will consider in what way to tell you what you desire to know. This home will be darkened by the knowledge; but it is too late—let the cloud fall.'

I went up to him and kissed his hand, but he was not softened; he withdrew it coldly and turned away. Most miserable did I feel as I went slowly up-stairs to my own room. I sat down by the window, lifted the blind, and gazed out. It was little more than a month since I had entered the house as a bride, and I felt as if my future life had suddenly changed and become dimmed

by strange shapeless fears and forebodings. While I thus lingered Mrs. Judson came into the room. She was not in the habit of attending me at night, and I was surprised by her sudden entrance. I noticed an unusually sad and weary look upon her face, and that her eyes were red with crying.

She lowered her voice as she came up beside me, took my hand in both hers, and said pityingly, 'Do not read this to-night, dear mistress; but I have no choice, and must give it to you. Dr. Connor has sent it up, and desires that when you have read it you will never speak of the subject again either to himself or to any one else. He sends you his love, but is too much distressed to see you again to-night.' She placed on the table a large sealed envelope, and, with a look of sad meaning, said, 'Good-night, and may you rest well; but do not, do not open this to-night. You are worn out. Pray for God's blessing, and go to your bed; you are over-young for so much trouble.'

The door closed on her pale warning face. I was stricken to my heart with a cold fear. What might this envelope contain? I was unable to restrain my hand a moment. I sprang to the table, tore it open, and saw a worn-looking country newspaper folded and refolded to suit the cover. Inside was written in my husband's hand, but in wavering characters, unlike his ordinary writing, 'Read it, and burn it.'

'Read what?' I asked myself, as I tremblingly unfolded it. Two black crosses in ink marked two separate articles. I sat down by the flickering fire; it was nearly out; the night was bitterly cold. A low sobbing wind wailed without in sympathy with my own sorrowful heart. I placed my candle on a table beside me, lifted up a supplication for strength to bear all I should read within it, and opened the paper.

The newspaper was dated Dec. 23, 1844. It was a copy of the *Ambledon Courier*, a weekly paper which my husband took in, and from which I had sometimes noticed that portions were carefully cut out before it was placed on my table. I read the shorter of the articles first. It was headed, 'Melancholy Suicide of Miss Amy Connor, at the Moor House, Overton. On Friday night last, Dec. 17th, as Dr. Connor was returning from Ambledon about midnight he was met by his sister, Miss Connor, on the high-road between the turnpike and the second milestone from the town. The unhappy lady had only strength to stagger forward and fall on the step of the gig in which the doctor sat. He raised her, placed her beside him, and drove rapidly home. On arriving at his own door, about half a mile distant from the spot where he had met her, it was found that she had ceased to breathe. She was lifted out by her brother and by his two servants, Simon and Martha Judson, and placed on a couch in the sitting-room. Every means was used

to restore animation, but it was apparent that the unfortunate young lady had died from the effect of a large dose of tincture of aconite, as a small phial, half emptied, was found tightly grasped in her right hand. The body awaits the inspection of the coroner and magistrates. Farther particulars will be given when the inquest has been held.'

Years have passed since I read the dreadful words of this brief announcement, but they have remained stamped on the very substance of my brain. The longer article contained the particulars of the inquest. I cannot remember the sequence of the events, but I gathered that Archibald Piggott was the coroner; that my husband was the first witness called; that he led the way to the ordinary sitting-room (ah, heaven, our little home-room which I had so loved and rejoiced in!); that the body of his sister lay in rigid stillness, robed in a loose white robe on the couch; on her head a torn veil, with pieces of bramble entangled in it (that veil, had I not seen it when I interrupted my husband in the inner room?); in her right hand the fatal phial. The face was calm, the lips slightly parted and quite blue. I went on reading with strained and burning eyes. I seemed to see it all before me! My husband was asked many and searching questions. He was cross-examined by the coroner, and it was plain that dark suspicions were in Mr. Piggott's mind (which, perhaps, I shuddered to think were still there). But Dr. Connor's answers were perfectly satisfactory, and his deep grief and horror were most evident to all. He stated that Miss Connor had been insane for three years past; that he was her only natural guardian and protector; and that he had devoted himself to her, and placed with her, as her attendant, by night and day, an old and faithful servant, Martha Judson, who was passionately attached to the deceased. He said that his sister had never shown any suicidal impulses; that she was perfectly quiet, but invariably depressed, and, as is usual with the insane, could not bear to see himself, her nearest relative, as she associated him with one who had broken his faith to her, and whose ill-usage had led to her insanity.

On the night of the 17th he stated that he met her on the Ambledon-road, and saw at once she must have drunk the deadly drug at the moment when she saw the gig pass, as she expired even before he could raise her from the step. The quantity of aconite she had taken, he said, would cause death in sixty or eighty seconds. He had left the phial in Simon Judson's care, as it was to be carried to the infirmary early on the following morning. It had 'Poison; for external use only,' written on it in large letters.

Simon Judson was called. He confirmed the last statement, and said he had placed the bottle in his hat on a table in the hall, that he might remember his master's message about it in the morn-

ing. He had never seen it again until he saw it in Miss Connor's hand when he helped to lift her out of the gig.

Martha Judson was then summoned. She was in an agony of distress, and rushed forward to the sofa, throwing herself on the body, from which she could with difficulty be separated. She was hardly able to answer the questions which were strictly insisted on by the coroner, especially as to the time she left Miss Connor on the previous evening; but at length she gave the following evidence: That she had undressed the young lady, and that she had seen her safely in bed as usual, between nine and ten o'clock; that she had not noticed any excitement in her; that, on the contrary, she was more submissive than ordinary, and laid down more quickly than was her habit. The outer door of her room opened on the landing, and this was always locked at night. Mrs. Judson slept in the room with Miss Connor in a separate bed. She generally retired to rest herself at eleven, but on this night she had stayed talking to her husband till past midnight, when, as she was preparing to go up-stairs, she heard the gig stop, and ran out into the hall. As she did so she saw that the hall door was ajar. It flashed on her that Miss Connor must have stolen out, and she remembered with remorse that she had not locked the outer door of the bedroom when she had left her more than two hours before. In another moment she knew it was all over, and that her young mistress, as she called her, was dead. She sobbed out over and over, 'And it was by my hand, for it was I who was her nurse, and who loved her, and yet I left her—I left her to wander out and die on the high-road.'

The poor woman was removed from the room; and the verdict was returned: 'That Miss Connor had died from the effects of poison by aconite, taken under an access of insanity.'

Dr. Connor was severely blamed for leaving so deadly a poison in a servant's hands under the roof with an insane person, without a strict injunction to keep it under lock and key; and a note was added by the editor stating that it was feared the above sad circumstances would lead to Dr. Connor's departure from Overton, as he had expressed himself as deeply offended by the manner in which the inquiry had been conducted.

Twice did I read this bald newspaper statement of the terrible tragedy which had been acted out under our miserable roof; then I rose, and tearing it into atoms set fire to them, and watched till every quivering spark was black and dead. I dared not think over the facts. My head was hot, my heart was throbbing, my thoughts were confused. I would pray—I would wait—I would be patient. Thus did I lie down alone, for the first time in my altered home.

Chapter V.

THE SUMMONS.

The slow hours dragged on heavily. Under the happiest circumstances the closing days of November are generally marked by outward gloom. What these days were to me under the conflict of feeling through which I was passing can never be described. It was a bitter trial that, fight with them as I would, I could not keep down the rising doubts of my husband's truth and honour. Fain would I have trusted him as before, and each day when he was absent from me I endeavoured to school myself into the old confidence I used to feel; but with the return of the evening, as the shadows fell upon the landscape, even so fell the shadow of a great doubt across my own soul. It was with an effort now that I met him with a smiling face, and I soon saw that he knew it was such. The conversations we used to hold together grew more constrained each day, and at length he would take his reading-lamp and book directly after dinner and leave me to myself. Every day I determined that I would speak and break this spell of cold silence, and every day found me with a more fearful and sinking heart. And thus November closed, and the shortening days and wintry skies seemed to sympathise with the deepening obscurity over my own life.

One afternoon I determined to explore the moor by which my husband always returned home. I had usually confined my walks to the high-road between our house and Overton, instinctively shrinking from the barren bleak tract that bounded the garden. Pushing open the gate at the end of the gravel-walk I found myself at once upon the moor. A few cold white clouds hung in the gray sky; the ground was covered with a coarse marshy grass, and here and there stunted gorse and blackberry bushes heightened rather than relieved its desolate appearance. There was a track of wheels across it, but no actual road, and I judged that this must be the mark of my husband's gig, and that I should be right in keeping to it. I walked musingly on, and soon found that the moor was larger in extent than I had thought; for I must have gone at least two miles before I reached the Ambledon-road, which crossed it. The short day did not allow of my going farther, and I began to retrace my steps by the high-road, expecting it to be a more cheerful though perhaps a longer way home; but to my surprise I found myself at my own door in less than half the time I had taken to walk over the moor. I understood now why my husband chose the moor road at night, though it was the longest and roughest, rather than pass a spot haunted by so fatal a memory. Pity took possession of me. I thought what his state of mind must be, and I resolved to shake off the kind of nightmare fancies with which I was tormented

try to be again the sunshine of his home. I ran up-stairs, and put on a white dress with bright ribbons, took pains with my hair, endeavouring to look like the happy wife he used to praise and admire. I made the room as cheerful as possible, piling on wood and lighting the lamp, and then stationed myself by the window to watch for his coming.

The gate was soon swung back, and I saw his tall figure coming up the path. Simon always met him at the gate to take the horse and gig to the stable, while he entered the house through the garden. I ran out to welcome him joyfully. He scarcely answered, but I saw by his face that he was pleased. I took studious care in no way to revert to the estrangement that had lately come between us, and though I could see how surprised he was at my manner, I knew he was gladdened by it; and when dinner was over, to my delight he remained in the room, and, seating himself by me, took my hand and said,

'Now, Georgie, have you anything you would like to ask me?'

I felt that I blushed, but I could not reply, as I knew that there was a host of questions I longed to put to him. He did not give me time to speak, but continued:

'Do not think, child' (I knew he had forgiven me by that kind word), 'that I have not read very clearly what has been in your heart during the last fortnight. You have been struggling with many unworthy thoughts of your husband, but to-night you are more like your old self, and if it will please you I will tell you something of my earlier life.'

I murmured that I did not wish him to do this if it pained him, though all the while I was longing to hear his story.

'Don't flatter yourself that you mean me to take you at your word,' he said; 'no, I will tell you a part of my story that will at least prove the confidence I have in your generous nature. How old are you, child?'

'Why, Robert, you know, only nineteen.'

'And I am thirty-five, and from that fact you may guess at once that you are not the only one I have loved.'

My foolish heart beat wildly as he said this, and with an impulse I could not resist, I cried,

'Is she alive now?'

'No, she died more than a year before I saw your face; and shall I tell you why I loved it? It was because it wore the same innocent yet proud dignity that rested on the face of my dead love.'

'May I know her name?'

He remained silent several moments, and then said,

'Yes; it shall not be a half confidence; you shall know it presently. I was not always a doctor;' he said this with a sort of ironical contempt; 'ten years ago you would not have believed that

the gay Captain Connor of the 30th could have become the grave sallow man who sits beside you.'

'Were you really in the army, Robert? why did you leave it?'

'That involves a long story, but you must have it, I suppose; it will not give you a higher opinion of your husband.'

He went on with frequent hesitation and evident effort, as if choosing his words and weighing their force and meaning.

'Well, I was extravagant and rash. I had talents, and might have made my father happy. He was a physician, and was most desirous I should study medicine, and follow the same profession. As long as he lived I obeyed him; but my wilful spirit never bent itself in earnest to my duty. I had no mother, she had died long years before; and when my father's sudden death released me, as I deemed, from the observance of his wishes, I found myself in possession of an ample fortune, and at once entered a fashionable regiment. Here, probably, I should have made shipwreck of character and fortune, had it not been for the major of the regiment, who became my best friend, and under whose influence I ought to have grown into a worthier man. But he left about two years after I had joined, and I only saw him at intervals, when I spent my long leave at his castle.'

My husband stopped for a moment as if to consider; then:

'I may as well tell you that this man is Lord Carwithen, and the friendship I have spoken of is as strong as ever. Some day you shall know him, and you will learn to regard him as I do. On my second visit to his old home, I found his sister, who had been educated abroad, had come back to take her place as mistress of the castle. Carwithen and Lady Olive Mayne were orphans, and they seemed to live for each other. This girl might have been your sister; she had your hair, your voice, and tender beseeching eyes. At the close of my stay, my friend asked me to apply for a longer leave. He wished me to know his sister better, he said. Too gladly I remained; too absorbed I soon became in a deeper sentiment than I had yet felt for woman. It was winter, and after returning from shooting, I used to find her in the drawing-room by the fire-light. She had a voice that bound me with a magical spell to her side—tender and exquisitely musical; and soon we began to talk of graver themes than are usually discussed between officers and young ladies. She was one of those who ennoble one's nature the nearer one draws to them. I began to be ashamed of my worthless life; and when I left and looked back at the old Norman pile, which seemed to frown on my hopeless love and stamp the distance between its owners and myself, I vowed I would never return, but break off at once and for ever from the strong temptation of her presence. I had neither ancestry nor position. My extravagant habits had nearly exhausted my fortune, and I knew I should soon be reduced to a

captain's pay. How could such as I lift my eyes to Lady Olive? A year went by. My friend and his sister went to Germany, and we ceased to correspond. Suddenly I met him in the autumn of the following year. He treated me with unchanged cordiality, gave me a hearty invitation to spend Christmas at Carwithen, and accused me of cutting him and treating him with unkind neglect. I refused the invitation, and spoke coldly and repellingly. "Connor," he said, "I insist on knowing what you mean by this caprice!" I evaded his question for some time; but at last he drew the truth from me. Instead of treating my presumption with disdain, he wrung my hand warmly and said, "Connor, my best wishes would be fulfilled if I could see you Olive's husband."

'I was breathless with astonishment; but can you blame me that I yielded and went down to the castle with him? It was in the last days of October that I saw her again; she was gentler and more beautiful than ever; graver too, and showing more decided dislike of entering society. She went through all her duties as hostess with exquisite grace; but there was a languor and sadness at the end of every dinner or gay meeting which showed how great a burden she felt it. The days went on, and I dreaded, yet longed, to tell her all. At length, urged by her brother, feeling the strongest doubt as to the issue, and knowing I was risking the happiness of my life on one cast, I spoke. I was met by the most decided, even peremptory, refusal. Unlike her usual self, she answered me with sternness, and let me know that her rejection was irrevocable. I did not wait to see Carwithen, but wrote a note, telling him of the ruin of my hopes, bidding him farewell, and praying him never to seek me again; and then left the castle, as I thought for ever, an embittered and almost desperate man. I took the step I had long contemplated, and sold out. I plunged at once into an obscure part of East London, returned to the pursuits of my youth, entered myself as a student again at Guy's Hospital, and strove in every way to cut off all ties with those who had known me in my military life. Seven weary years of disappointment and poverty passed by—years of misery; let them be blotted out!'

He stopped, and almost groaned. I asked faintly,

'Was it then you took your sister to live with you?'

He moved his head in assent, and seemed struggling with some strange feeling. Presently he went on:

'I could not have given her a home before. Martha Judson had been her nurse and servant, and when my father died, she continued to live with her and take care of her. I cannot speak of this; remember our compact. I have more to tell you of Olive—shall I go on?'

I kissed his burning forehead, for my unfortunate question had brought back a wild look in his eyes, half suspicious, half remorse-

ful; and I reproached myself for my persistency in reviving the forbidden subject. He pressed me to him, and at length went on, as if repeating a lesson:

'One wretched night, when I was returning from a more civilised part of the town than I was used to frequent, a friendly grasp was placed on my arm, and a voice rang in my ear with an old familiar charm: "Connor, my dearest old fellow, where have you buried yourself so long? Come back to your old friends; we have tried to find you, and have felt that you treated us very ill, but we'll forgive you." I stammered out that it was impossible; my circumstances were changed. I was no longer a fit associate for him. He interrupted me: "No change of circumstances, no loss, except of honour, ought to shut you out from those who love you." "Love me!" I said bitterly. "You forget, my lord, the reason of my hasty flight from your house seven years ago; and yet I think I wrote plainly enough." "That is a mystery," he said, "which only one person can clear up; you had better, nay you must, come and ask her yourself." Again I repeated, "It is impossible; you don't know what I am. I am a poor doctor, seeking for his daily bread by hard work." Still he persisted, though he looked astonished, and drew me on in the direction he was walking. "Listen to me," he said; "you know my unconventional ways—my Bohemianisms, if you like. I was never led by worldly maxims, and if that be madness, I am madder than ever. I desire nothing but happiness for Olive, and the poor child hasn't known what that means since you left us. You have been rash and wilful, Connor, and have shown little knowledge of woman's nature thus to accept the first rebuff; but you were always too proud and sensitive. However, I insist on your seeing Olive again; she is too noble not to explain her own feelings if you seek to know them." I felt as if I were walking on in a dream. Could it be? Was I indeed to see her and hear the melody of her voice again? The fascination was too strong, and without attempting farther resistance, I went home with my old friend. He took me into his library and begged me to compose myself. He entreated me, if I loved him as of old, to give him my entire confidence.'

My husband paused, and seemed to gasp for breath.

'His goodness was too much for my almost-broken heart; it had been so long since I had heard a friend's voice or grasped a true hand. He listened to my brief and miserable story, of my hopelessness of taking a higher place in my profession, as I had no money, no patron, and little practice, even among tradespeople. I wound up by asking fiercely, "And can you dream, my lord, of presenting an utterly ruined hopeless man to your sister? Let me go back to my obscurity, and forget, for heaven's sake, that you have ever known me, or think of me as the lost friend of your youth, for I am worse than dead to you and yours." Lord Carwithen heard me

patiently as I raved on in this bitter manner, but did not change his purpose. I cannot tell you all his persuasions and arguments. At length, finding they had no effect upon me, and that I was impatient to go, he cried out with strange anguish, "Connor! Olive has not long to live! I have consulted physicians at home and abroad in vain. I have taken her to Madeira, to Egypt—every change, every means have been tried, but all is useless. My sister, my only beloved one, my guardian angel, is slowly dying of a cureless malady, for which, Connor, there is no name in science, for it is disappointed love." I stared wildly at him. "It is true," he cried. "It is too late; her life hangs on the slenderest thread, and yet though it is too late to save her, you, and you only, Connor, could help to make the few weeks she has left on earth happy!" Do you think I could have torn myself away after this? What was I, wretched and unworthy, that I should thus have been honoured by the love of so pure a being? I saw her again; my love became worship; and at last I learned, all too late, from her own gentle lips, the true reason of her rejection. A disease of the heart, which she had inherited from her mother, and which that mother had enjoined her to keep secret, had made her resolve to live unmarried, fearing she might transmit an hereditary curse to innocent offspring. Olive begged me still to keep this secret from her brother. She feared, poor child, that he might also think his own a doomed life, and might be led, as she had been, to pass it in cheerless celibacy, and leave no children to inherit his name. I did not dare to tell her that she had been the victim of a misguided judgment; and that under other circumstances she might have baffled the insidious disease, and been a happy wife and mother. I could not add to her sorrow by showing her that her sacrifice had been useless; but there was yet one blessing left me—one drop of consolation in the bitter cup which was my portion. My own researches in science had been directed peculiarly towards the palliation of heart complaint; and though hers was now of a hopeless character, I was enabled to alleviate her sufferings, and sustain the frame that was sinking, surely but slowly, into an early grave. I kept her sad secret from my friend; and when he found his Olive for a time wonderfully restored, that she could once more sing to him and join him in his drives, he could not believe that death was approaching, and reiterated his desire that I should become her husband. It was with difficulty that I persuaded him to dismiss this dream. And it was only by accepting the office of domestic physician, and taking up my abode under his roof, that I could entirely turn him from the idea. It would have been profanation to act on it. She was sealed for heaven, and day by day her beauty grew more spiritual and her mind more heavenly. We came down together to the old home for which she sighed, and there Olive's sweet life gradually ebbed out; and when the autumn leaves

were falling she died, and was laid in the vault under the private chapel of the castle.'

He stopped abruptly, and covered his face with his hands. Why was it that, as his mournful story ended, I thought with a quick dart of pain of the obscure grave in Overton churchyard? Sad as Lady Olive's fate had been, what was it but peace and rest compared to the tragic end of Amy Connor? Even at this instant, when my heart ached with sympathy, I knew and felt that he was hiding some lower depth of woe and shame in his past life; but I struggled against this conviction and threw myself on my husband's breast, while I told him, weeping, that I would give my life and heart to soothe and comfort him. I reproached myself for past coldness, and implored his forgiveness. He returned my embrace warmly, and told me that better days were coming. 'Only love and trust me,' he said, 'and all shall be well. Carwithen has begged me to leave this place, and, treating me as he ever has, with a brother's confidence, has settled that we shall go to Nice with him after Christmas, and has persuaded me to arrange with a successor and give up my practice to him at once. Ever since you pressed me to tell you my sorrows, I have been striving to take you out of this woful house; but your coldness chilled me and kept me silent. It is over now. Let us look forward to a bright future in a new land.'

We sat late that evening by our fireside. Never had I been so happy; never had I seen my husband so brilliant and fascinating. He gave me sketches of his adventures among the London poor, humorous and pathetic, and I sat with eyes riveted on his face as it reflected a hundred varying feelings, touched with tenderness or glowing with indignation, as he dilated on the wrongs and sufferings of the neglected dwellers in the cellars and garrets of East London.

That winter night was not to close without a singular change in the impression which it stamped on my memory for ever. How long I had slept I know not. It had been a happy dreamless sleep; I had not known so calm a one for many troubled nights. Suddenly I awoke; in one instant I was perfectly and vividly awake; a woman's voice with a wailing accent had uttered the name of 'Robert Connor.' It seemed to be close to the bed, close to my husband's ear, as he lay with head thrown back on the pillow, and the night-light casting wavering shadows on his face. My heart beat as if it would break, and as I sat up and tried to quiet my excited nerves, I became conscious of a chill, damp and heavy as the dews of the grave, which struck to my very heart and made my teeth chatter. The fire was still burning, and there was no evident reason for this death-like cold; but it was no fancy, for turning shudderingly to awaken my husband, I saw with terror that he too was trembling, and that a cold sweat was breaking out on his brow. His features were convulsed, and with half-parted lips he seemed intently listen-

ing, his eyes but half-closed, and I saw that he was bound by some vision of the night. With an awe I could not conquer I listened for his utterance. He raised his hand twice, as if to keep back some figure from his side; his agony seemed to gather strength; he struggled to speak, and at last, raising his head from the pillow, he said, in tones so thick with horror that I could scarcely have believed them to be his:

'Amy, I will be there; the letter shall be given. I will be there, I will be there!'

Three times in choking accents and at a few moments' interval he reiterated the promise; and then, with a long-drawn groan of misery, he sank back, and his face assumed the profound quiet of one but newly dead.

I was filled with superstitious fear; but I could not speak. I had learnt some farther revelation of the buried secret—that sleep and night could not hide this woe and guilt, for guilt and woe they must be to force out this cry from his soul. I tried to pray for him and for myself; but a weight was on my brain, and no thought of heaven came, nor any idea but one—that Amy Connor's spirit had been near us in that room, and had summoned her brother to meet her. When would that dread meeting be? As I tried to quiet my still shuddering frame and lie down again, the church clock of Overton tolled one. I remembered that in another week the anniversary of Amy's death would come round, and I knew that the crisis of my fate was drawing near. O, night of unspeakable horror! How the long hours passed I know not. I dared not meet Robert's eye when the morning came, so pleaded headache, and begged that the room might be darkened, and that I might be left alone. I heard the door close behind him; then yielding to the suppressed feeling with which I had fought all night, I sank back in an hysteric agony of tears.

HOW I LOST THE COUNTY

'LUCKY fellow, you!' said my friend Sardonyx, as we left the House together, after the division that presaged the dissolution which was imminent, 'to have a county in your pocket. Well, here's the confounded business to begin again, and after the facer I got at Newmarket—it's maddening, Walwyn, upon my word.'

I looked down upon him with the easy compassion of a man with a secure seat. 'Upon my word,' I said, 'I don't care two pins about it. The county will have me, or I'd just as soon not be bothered with it. But then it costs me next to nothing.'

'There you go,' said Sardonyx savagely. 'Costs next to nothing! O you lucky divil! Why, I daresay you won't spend a couple of hundred for your election!'

'About seventy-five is the usual figure,' I replied; 'and upon my word, I think I get the worth of it in butter, and eggs, and fish, and saddles of mutton that the people send me in honour of the event.'

'Ugh!' cried Sardonyx, groaning again. 'Well, you ought to put down a couple of thousand, at least, at the Carlton as a thank-offering; or, perhaps, you'd better hand it over to me. I'm in for six, at least. You won't? Hard-hearted old brute, farewell!'

Next morning I had a letter from our 'Whip:'

'Dear Walwyn,—I may tell you in extreme confidence that the chief is determined for diss.' (A thing everybody had known about a week.) 'You're all right at Cadnant, I suppose; but keep your eye on Gimball. To your tents, O Israel!'

I'd a particular reason for not wishing to leave town just then, and it was with great reluctance that I ordered my man to pack my things, and meet me at Euston for the five-o'clock express. There was no fear of anybody coming forward against me; but I felt that I ought to go down to make arrangements. As for Gimball, that was absurd. He'd never dare to do such a thing. Why, my father had been the making of Gimball, and to think of his coming forward against us! Pooh! he would be laughed out of the county.

Hitherto, as Sardonyx had told me, I had been a lucky fellow. I had been left an orphan early, and came into the estate at my majority, with a fine accumulation to start with. I had found a seat in Parliament waiting for me without trouble or expense. Certainly I speedily got rid of the accumulation, and had dipped the

estate a little since; but I enjoyed myself considerably in the interim, and had accumulated a fine fund of experience.

Penwalyn, my place in Wales, is not a favourite residence of mine. It is a damp and gloomy house, surrounded by ancestral trees that seem to distil green mould, and is a dozen miles from anywhere. It is very little changed since my great-grandfather's time; the furniture is of his date, I think, and the rooms are of that period—dark and dull. The hall is the only decent place in the house, and is hung with the portraits of my ancestors. I haven't much respect for my ancestors—I believe they were a coarse raffish lot, and ate and drank a good deal more than was good for them or their descendants. But there are some good portraits. Sir Whipple Walwyn, by Vandyke, a man with a peaked beard, and hair hanging down over his shoulders: the courtly painter has subdued the glowing tint in his nose, but there it is, nevertheless—the family badge. The next is a Lely: Lady Gwendolen Walwyn, a court beauty of Charles II.'s time; a décolleté, simpering beauty, who first introduced good looks into our family. Then there is Sir Peregrine, by Hudson, in a tie wig, blue-velvet coat, and white-satin waistcoat, and the glowing red nose, characteristic of the family, that makes one think that Lady Gwendolen, his mother, was perhaps a good deal belied. A sweet girl's face, by Sir Joshua, is the charm of the collection, and she it was who kicked over the traces so confoundedly, whose husband was killed in a duel about her, and who bolted afterwards with the survivor. On the whole, I had just about as soon spend a week in the family vault as at Penwalyn. I've the greatest possible objection to a place that seems to reek of deceased ancestors; and I sympathise most earnestly with those Persian fellows, who, they tell me, rather than inhabit a house in which their parents have died, pull it down and build another.

I got to Penwalyn next morning at eleven or so, and sent for my steward, Rowland Evans, who lives just on the outskirts of the park; the queerest-looking fellow you ever saw. He wears a tall fluffy hat stuck on the back of his head; his eyes are long and narrow, and he generally keeps them half-closed; he has a hooked nose, and a mouth that is always buttoned up tight into an expression of care and anxiety. He is dressed in gray Welsh tweed, and carries in one hand a voluminous umbrella, in the other a square basket opening with a couple of flaps at the top.

I was waiting for him in the business-room, a little room looking out on the park, the only pleasant one in the house, as I think, which I generally use when I am at Penwalyn. As soon as he came in, he deposited his basket on the floor, put his hat on the top of that, and balanced his umbrella across them. When he had done this, he came and accosted me very warmly. Rowland has known

me ever since I was the size of your thumb, and is, I believe, sincerely attached to me.

'How do you do, Master Richard? How do they get on in London, sir, and at the Parliament-house? Indeed, I am very glad to see you, sir. I have brought you a few eggs, sir, and a little fresh butter, all made at home, sir.'

'Thank you, Evans. Yes, I'm all right. As for the Parliament, they're going to dissolve it.'

'Dear me, Sir Richard; and what a pity, such a fine Parliament as it was! Well, indeed, and what shall we do next?'

'The next thing is a general election, I suppose,' said I carelessly; 'but we're all right down here.'

'O, dear, Sir Richard; well now, I don't know; there is no bounds to the presumption of some people.'

'But nobody would oppose *me* in my own county; the thing's impossible, Evans!'

''Tis that distressful Gimball, sir, that we have to fear; none other for sure. There is no bound to his folly and assurance. He would have no chance against you, Sir Richard; but indeed I fear he means to try. So I have heard, at least; but I wouldn't have you go too much by what I say, sir.'

This coincided very disagreeably with what our Whip had told me, and I was a good deal annoyed at the intelligence. I didn't fear the result of a contest, but I found myself all of a sudden likely to be called upon for a considerable sum of money, and I might look forward, for the next three months, to a constant sojourn at Penwalyn, enlivened by incessant canvassing and entertaining all the county side. And I had hoped to have been able to slip away to Italy, where the Ruddocks (I was awfully spooney on Hilda Ruddock then) were going for the winter.

Gimball was a retired lawyer, who had made a great fortune—with all kinds of rascality, I've no doubt—and settled down in Cadnant, where he built a house twice as big as any other in the county. As he was constantly giving dinner-parties and balls, and so on, he had become rather popular in the neighbourhood, and he was always ready to head a subscription, whether it was for a chapel or a church, or to replace Morris Pugh's pig that had died of the measles. Such a fellow as that was no end of a nuisance, always leading one into expenses and bothers. Then he was very active as a magistrate; and as he didn't care about shooting himself, not knowing the stock of a gun from the barrel, he was always making capital by letting off poachers, and generally bidding for the applause of the mob. But I never suspected him of such treachery as trying to supplant me in my own county.

The best thing I could do, as I thought, was to beard the man in his own den; it might be that all this was only idle rumour, and

that I was disquieting myself for nothing at all. It's the best policy to be plain and straightforward in these matters. Yes, I'd drive over and see him at once, and put it to him plain and plump: 'Are you going to stand for the county, or is it all a lie that people are telling about you?'

There was a little difficulty about the conveyance at first. The carriage-horses were at grass, and I had no saddle-horses down here. The nag that was kept for the use of the house had gone dead-lame, and I should have had to send half a dozen miles for post horses. Evans kept a trap, I knew, and I asked him to drive me over to Bryncoed, Mr. Gimball's place. He was quite overpowered with the honour I did him, and went off to get ready his trap.

It was about six miles from Penwalyn to Bryncoed, rather a bad road, but Evans's little pony scrambled up and down the hills at a capital pace. We came, in about half an hour, to a gate leading into the domain of Bryncoed; there was no lodge there, and as Evans was driving I jumped down to open the gate. I was about to swing it to when Evans had driven through, but was stopped by a hail from behind me.

'Hullo! young man, hold hard!' The speaker was a young girl, mounted on a handsome black horse, who had just cantered up on the turf. 'How de do, Evans?' she went on, nodding in a friendly way to my steward. 'You've got your boy home then, have you?'

'Bless the young lady, no! Why, this is Sir Richard, Miss Gimball!' But she had cantered away without listening to the explanation. 'What an extraordinary thing, sir, to take you for my son, sir!'

I had observed that she was a very pretty, piquante-looking girl, and wondered how it was that I had not made her acquaintance before, till I remembered that I had not been down for more than a few days at a time for several years, during which period Miss Gimball had no doubt emerged from the pupa state of short frocks and frilled trousers.

It is a pretty place, that Bryncoed, built on a green lawn sloping right down to the brink of the charming estuary of the Tyv; a bright-looking modern house with plenty of light and air about it. A little yacht was moored in the river, and a couple of boats were lying on the strand; the cheerful tones of a piano echoed from a French window opening on the lawn. I heard the sound of voices and laughter.

A very cheerful-looking servant opened the door and took my card. He looked more serious when he returned. Indeed the whole house seemed all at once to have assumed a sadder aspect. The sun disappeared behind a cloud, the music ceased suddenly, the voices and laughter: but I was blind to the omen.

'Master's very unwell,' said the man; 'too ill to see anybody, sir.'

'My business is very important,' I said. 'Who is the mistress of the establishment?' I whispered to Evans.

'Mrs. Pendergap, his sister, sir,' replied Evans.

'Take my card to Mrs. Pendergap, and ask if I can see her.'

I was presently shown into a drawing-room, where Mrs. Pendergap joined me. She was a very pleasant, brisk little brown woman, one of that jolly sort who do all the talking themselves, and yet don't bore you with their clatter. She divined my purpose in a moment.

'About the election, isn't it? Poor Edward, my brother—such a disappointment! Yes; it's no use making a secret about it now. He fully intended to oppose you. Now, poor fellow, his thoughts are entirely weaned from worldly matters.' She passed her handkerchief lightly over her eyes.

'Dear me,' I said, quite distressed that I had intruded my affairs into this sorrowful house; 'I had no idea. Is there danger?'

'Not immediate; O, no; but these attacks—so distressing. I daresay he'll see you. I'll go and prepare him for your visit.'

By and by I was ushered up into the sick-room. It was shaded and darkened, and I could barely see the tip of the sick man's great hooked nose, his prominent drooping eyelids. He was surrounded by a battery of physic bottles. His hand was outside the coverlet, and he took mine in his and pressed it feebly.

'Sorry to see you in this way,' I said. I really was a little touched at the sight of my enemy thus laid low.

'How trivial,' he whispered, 'in such seasons of sickness do our little differences of parties and sects appear! I'm glad to see you, and shake you by the hand. If I've ever said or done anything offensive to you, Walwyn, forgive me.'

'Don't mention it,' I replied; 'bygones, and so on. To tell you the truth, I heard that you intended to oppose me for the county. I'm glad to find that the rumour is false.'

'O, Walwyn,' he whispered, 'do I seem to be a likely man to oppose anybody? I have had opposition enough; I should like to make my peace with all the world now.'

This was a very satisfactory state of mind to be in; at the same time the conversation wasn't particularly lively, and I was glad to make my way from the sick-room.

'You'll take your luncheon with them,' he said, as I went out; 'do, it will please me, and I shall feel that our reconciliation is sincere.'

I was hungry enough, and glad to have luncheon. Miss Gimball had come home from her ride too, and was delighted at having treated Sir Richard Walwyn as the steward's son. We were capital friends directly, and I felt altogether so comfortable at Bryncoed, that I thought with a shudder of returning to dim Penwalyn, the ghosts, and the family portraits. After luncheon, a message came down from the sick-room:

'Ask Sir Richard to send for his traps, and stop the night.'

Well, I hated the idea of sleeping at Penwalyn so much, that I was tempted to stay; and certainly Gimball's was a very jolly house, and everybody tried to make me comfortable.

Old Evans didn't like it a bit. He sent for me before he started home, and when I went out to speak to him, he pointed gravely to the wheel-tracks on the principal drive. There were certainly a good many of them; but the doctor, and the parson, and the lawyer, and sympathising inquiries would account for that.

'Do you remember, sir, the story of the jackass and the lion who was sick?'

'I don't see how it applies to me, Evans; poor old Gimball isn't likely to eat me.'

'Well, sir—well, indeed, I wish you'd come home with me, Sir Richard.'

I wasn't going to be put off a pleasant evening by Evans's nonsense. I believe he'd like me to sit in the middle of my hall at Penwalyn and drink strong ale to the sound of the harp, as my forefathers might have done, with the cook and kitchenmaid and Mrs. Richards, the housekeeper, joining in chorus.

Gimball had a capital cook and excellent wine. Both Miss Gimball and her aunt were good musicians, with beautiful voices, and I spent a most pleasant evening. Next day we went out in the yacht, had a delightful sail, lunched on board, and reached home, tired as dogs, just in time to dress for dinner. Couldn't go home that night either. The best of it was, I felt so secure about the election. Nobody but Gimball could run against me with the shadow of a chance. Gimball I had safe. I might enjoy myself as I liked for the next few days. Then I might think about business; about getting out my address and making arrangements for the walk over.

Next day I went home very reluctantly. I was desperately smitten with Lucy Gimball, and I think I should have made her an offer then and there but for one thing—I couldn't quite get over her apparent heartlessness. She didn't seem to care a button for her father's illness; except for a minute, when reminded of it, perhaps she'd put on a grave face, and then she'd be as jolly as ever next moment. Now if she didn't care for her father she wasn't likely to care much for her husband, after the novelty

of the thing was over; and this consideration made me haul off a bit.

I had a horrid bad night at Penwalyn. I dreamt I was buried alive in the family vault, my funeral attended by all the dead Walwyns—all sorts of horrors. Just before daylight I had a dream that a good deal impressed me, it was so vivid and real. A venerable old man with a long white beard appeared before me; he had a very angry scowling face, and after looking sternly at me for a few moments, he said, 'Silly boy, what it costs the souls of men to acquire, you fling away for women and trumpery!' There was something so fiery and life-like about the old man—I recognised him at once as my grandfather, whose portrait hangs in the dining-room over the big buffet—that I was involuntarily staggered and affected. I couldn't sleep after that, and rose and dressed and went out into the park. It was a charming morning, the sun had just risen, and the sky was filled with pink gauzy vapour, which in constant movement and change parted here and there, revealing purple mountain ranges and glowing peaks and pinnacles of rock. My heart smote me when I thought of my neglect of this my own county, and my running after foreign gods. I made half a resolution to amend, and take to better ways. Just at that moment I came to a spot where the road, the principal drive to the house, is cut through a range of rocks, leaving on each side of it a scarped precipitous face. Trees growing from the rocks above unite their branches over the road, the road itself is almost choked with bracken, ferns, and wild weeds, and when you have penetrated this tunnel of greenery, there opens upon you a pleasant vista of the river valley beyond, with a strip of sea in the distance.

Great was my astonishment to see this charming natural grotto defaced by two huge staring placards posted on either hand on the face of the rock. They were printed in double columns, one side Welsh, the other English. 'To the free and independent Electors of the County of Cadnant;' below that a stirring Radical programme, and attached to the manifesto the name of George Gimball.

In considerable agitation I hurried on to the house of Evans the steward. On the gable-end of his barn was posted a similar placard. He was coming out of his gate as I reached it.

'Evans,' I cried, pointing to the address, 'Evans, what's the meaning of all this?'

'O, don't you know all about it, Sir Richard?' said Evans, looking at me reproachfully. 'Haven't you been staying at his house all the time that he has been canvassing the county, and never a word from you against him? Why, Sir Richard, half your own tenants have promised him; for they thought there could be nothing against them as long as you were so friendly with Mr. Gimball; and I had no instructions from you, sir.'

'But he was ill in bed all the time, my good fellow.'

'O, sir, then you've been deceived by him. He's been scouring the county far and near, and everybody said that you were going to resign in his favour.'

'The scoundrel!' I cried, grinding my teeth with rage. 'Why, one might have been on one's guard against such a ruse among a tribe of savages.'

'Savages or not, sir, everybody says as he's sure to come in.'

And he did too. I never could win back the advantage he got in having the start of me. My own side looked suspiciously upon me, and nobody supported me warmly. I made desperate efforts to retrieve my position, and spent money like water; but it was all of no use. At the close of the poll the figures were, Gimball 8765, Walwyn 8257.

Since then I've been living abroad. The election cost me six thousand pounds, and that, on the top of other encumbrances, necessitated putting the estate to nurse. As for Lucy Gimball, she married a cotton-prince from Manchester—and I wish him joy of her.

FREDERICK TALBOT.

MULLIGAN'S POTEEN

Ballymaclooney House is perched on a narrow ledge jutting from out the side of one of the steepest, bleakest, and most barren mountains in the Western Highlands. Its hold upon the rocky shelf appears to be so frail, that the traveller, whilst inwardly conjecturing as to how 'the d—l it got there,' is impressed with the conviction that, avalanche fashion, it will tumble down upon him as he passes, and involuntarily ducks his head until he has left the source of apprehended danger at a considerable distance. This famished-looking mountain is situated on the high-road leading from the village of Leenan to the town of Westport, and Ballymaclooney commands a view extending almost from Croagh Patrick to that remarkable series of rugged elevations familiar to those who visit Connemara as 'The Twelve Pins.'

'The Castle,' as it is generally termed, was built by Cornelius Blake, a twenty-tumbler, hair-trigger, stone-wall, Galway squire, who expended almost his entire resources in its construction, and when remonstrated with upon the inadvisability of sinking his fortune, and that of his children, in erecting so useless an edifice in so barren a situation, invariably consoled his advisers by asking, 'Did you ever see such a view as that, man?'

'The view may be very fine, but—'

'Fine! Show me any spot for seven miles where a process-server could hide himself. By George, sir, he might as well be trying to serve a writ in the Claddagh, or on the keeper of the Arran lighthouse. Ballymaclooney is impregnable!'

In course of time Cornelius Blake paid the debt of nature, without, however, discharging his other liabilities, leaving to his son, James Burke Bodkin Joyce Blake, Ballymaclooney House, a cellar well stocked in claret and *poteen*, two thousand acres of bog, and a number of accommodation bills, facetiously termed 'straps,' across the backs of which the name 'James Burke Bodkin Joyce Blake' figured prominently, in a large and sprawling hand, bespeaking unlimited resources in the way of ink, and the presence of the time-honoured but latterly much-neglected quill of the goose. To meet these bills was an idea so utterly absurd, that Jim Blake absolutely scouted it, and feeling perfectly secure in the impregnability of his stronghold, and in the unswerving fidelity of his retainers, he bade haughty defiance to bailiff and process-server, saw 'lashins' of company, and lived like that bird so typical of nourishment laid on at high pressure, viz. a fighting-cock.

Now there resided in the city of Dublin 'a dirty little spalpeen of an attorney,' rejoicing in the name of Binks, who had purchased some of these identical 'straps' at rather a high figure, that is to say, at five shillings in the pound, under the impression that Mr. Blake of Ballymaclooney House would, if not actually in a position to take them up, pay such a rate of interest and delicate renewal fines as would in course of time not only refund the outlay, but ultimately return no inconsiderable profit; and he was rather disconcerted upon receiving no reply whatever to several communications of a pressing, and latterly of an unmistakably hostile and threatening, character. Mr. Binks was not a man to lie under the contumely of having his letters unanswered, especially as the cost of writing them was put down at 6*s*. 8*d*., and the perusal of the reply at 13*s*. 4*d*.; and as the service of a writ upon the sacred person of Mr. James Burke Bodkin Joyce Blake was considered, by the class of gentlemen who undertake such responsibilities, an extremely quixotic, if not hazardous experiment, Mr. Binks resolved, as the long vacation had set in, to kill two birds with one stone—to do Connemara, and 'to do' Mr. Blake of Ballymaclooney House, at one and the same time.

The legal practitioner forthwith proceeded to carry out his resolution, and one lovely morning in the month of August took his place beside the driver of the 'long car' which travels between Westport and Clifden.

'Do you know Ballymaclooney House, my man?' inquired Mr. Binks of the charioteer.

'Is it the castle ye mane?' demanded the driver in a surly tone.

He had been negotiating with a desirable-looking swell who was doing Ireland, for the acquisition of the box seat, since it is from this elevation the country can be seen at best and a guide-book rendered as uninteresting and as useless as a *Bradshaw;* but the little attorney had been too sharp for him, proclaiming this sacred portion of the vehicle public property, and asserting his legal rights. Young England wouldn't bore itself by disputation, and Mr. Binks remained master of the position.

'I mean Ballymaclooney House.'

'Do I know the castle?' persisted the driver.

'Castle or house, it's all the same, I suppose,' observed Mr. Binks snappishly.

The driver leisurely 'flicked' the ear of the off leader, turned slowly round, gazed for a moment at the man of law, and coolly remarked,

'Do I know the castle? Do I know me Patther and Avvey?'

In no way disconcerted by this negative style of reply, Mr. Binks proceeded to interrogate.

'I believe Mr. Blake resides at the house?'

'Castle, ye mane.'

'At the castle.'

'He do, an his father afore him that built it—may he rest in glory, amin! Gelang to Bagdad wud yer thricks!'

The latter portion of this observation was addressed to a lean quadruped, which evinced a lively desire to nibble away a portion of the collar of his yoke-fellow, inasmuch as the aforesaid collar was stuffed with hay, and within easy and tempting reach of his grinders.

'Is he wealthy?' continued Mr. Binks.

'Wealthy! Begorra, he's richer nor the Law-Life Company, that tuck Ballinahinch from the Martins. May their land turn into wather! Rich!' he continued; 'he's as rich as Crayosote!' and evidently well pleased with his classical allusion, he asked the attorney to 'hould the reins, while he readied his dudheen for a shough.'

Mr. Binks was not utterly displeased upon gaining this information. 'A straw best shows how the wind blows,' he thought, 'and this person must have some grounds for the statement.'

'I heard he was in debt?'

'Av coorse he is, over head an' ears,' responded the driver, lighting his short clay pipe, blackened with the constant use of a fierce tobacco and violent friction against all weathers. 'Wud ye have him any way else, wud ye? Shure, he's a gintleman, and good blood always gets credit.'

'I believe his father died in debt.'

'He had an illigant berrin, anyhow,' replied the driver, evading a direct answer. 'The finest funeral ye ever seen: the whole counthry was out, and lashins av atin and dhrinkin from the day he tuck the sickness till we sodded him. May he be lyin on roselaves in heaven this blessed minit!'

'Does the present Mr. Blake go out much?' asked the attorney, approaching more closely to the point.

'In coorse he do.'

'Shoots, fishes, and all that sort of thing?'

'Shoots! Begorra, av ye were to pass here next Tuesday, ye'd see how he can shoot!'

'Next Tuesday! Why *next* Tuesday?'

'Shure, Tuesday 'll be the 20th av August!' exclaimed the driver, with a tinge of irritation in his tone.

Mr. Binks was no sportsman. His little efforts in that line lay in bringing down human game at the commencement of term.

'Why will he shoot on that day more than any other?' he asked.

The driver gazed sternly at him with a view of ascertaining if he were being what is popularly known as 'chaffed,' but perceiving that the query was genuine, he exclaimed half aloud in the direction of his horses,

'Well, av all the—' but pulling up in time, 'Why, shure, Tuesday will be the first day for the grouse-shootin!'

'O!' exclaimed Mr. Binks, 'does Mr. Blake always come out on that day?'

'Be my sowl, I'd like to see the man that would hould him in! He'll be out to hear the cocks crowin on the hill, an he'll knock over his twinty brace afore brequest.'

Mr. Binks was enraptured. Here was the very knowledge he was so desirous of obtaining, falling like a ripe apple into his very lap. Rare luck! Hitherto it was simply impossible to serve James Burke Bodkin Joyce Blake, Esq., with a writ; now it was as easily done as though he was an unsuspecting bank clerk leaving his house at his usual hour for the purpose of proceeding to his office. Mr. Binks rubbed his hands gleefully, chuckled, wriggled, and betrayed his satisfaction in various spasmodic movements; and when Ballymaclooney House came in view, so great was his self-congratulation that he nearly tumbled off the box.

'That's the castle,' observed the driver as they passed beneath, with a jerk of his head upwards.

'It—it looks as if it was going to fall on us,' observed Mr. Binks, in faltering tones.

'Drive a little faster, coachman!' cried a lady from the body of the vehicle.

'Put on more steam, jarvey!' urged a commercial traveller from the other side.

'It's a snug nest,' remarked the coachman; 'no fear av damp or the lower story bein' undher wather.'

'How do you get up to it?'

'Be that *boreen*. Ye see that sthrip av white in the bog beyant?'

'Yes.'

'It comminces there.'

'Why, that's half a mile off.'

'It's better nor three half-miles.'

'And is there no other way of getting at the house?'

'Divil a wan, barrin ye wor a crow.'

'Mr. Blake is pretty safe up there,' observed the attorney with a shudder.

'Safe?'

'From we'll say arrest, sheriffs' officers, bailiffs.'

'There's not a man in Europe that would thry it, barrin he kem out av Swift's madhouse. Wan process-server went up as bould as a ram. He wor axed in mighty polite and aisy.

"I've come to say a word to Misther Blake," sez he.

"O, you'll see him time enough," sez wan.

"Won't ye take a tent av somethin to put betune yer shammy an the cowld?" sez another.

"I won't take nothin till I sarve this," sez the process-sarver, dhrawin the process frum out av his pocket.

"What's that?" sez wan.

"Let's look at it," sez another.

"Just lave it alone," sez the process-sarver, gettin a little shuk. "I've the law wud me," sez he, "an I call on yez in the Queen's name to stand be me."

"Is it a writ ye have, me man?" axes the butler, wan of the Joyces, wud every muscle in him as bare and as tight as the lash av this whip.

"Shure enough," sez the process-sarver.

"Boys," says the butler, "don't yez think this gintleman's hair is too lanky an long, and that it wants curlin?"

"Worse nor Father Daly's 'last mass' wig," sez the boys.

"Well, boys, as yez are all convaynient, we'll curl it for him, an this writ here 'll do for curlin paper."

'The process-server roared "Murther!" but it was done afore ye could say "spavin."'

Mr. Binks listened to this narrative with profound attention, but, with that mistrust which is part of the training of his profession, allowed seventy-five per cent for invention, and divided the balance by ten for cost of improbability. He blessed the particular star whose influence placed him beside the driver of the long car, and actually tipped him, upon arrival at Clifden, to the extent of half-a-crown.

'May I niver see the Twelve Pins,' muttered the astonished charioteer, 'av I thought there wor as much as wan farden so contagious to me!'

Mr. Binks posted special from Clifden to Galway, caught the mail train to Dublin, had a satisfactory interview with the representative of the sheriff for the county Mayo, who undertook to forward the writ of *ca. ça.* without loss of time, and as he emerged from the official den was heard to mutter with a grim chuckle, 'I'll go shooting, too, on the twentieth, Mr. Blake; let's see which of us will have the best sport.'

Mr. James Burke Bodkin Joyce Blake, the innocent cause of all this legal machinery being put in motion, was engaged in entertaining a small but select party at Ballymaclooney—small, because he was desirous of 'making a bag' that would be talked of all over the country, as he invariably packed hampers for a large circle of country friends, whose hospitality he was occasionally debarred from enjoying owing to the contumaciousness of some low-minded creditor, whose minions pertinaciously defended the passes like so many legal Spartans, but with whom he was desirous of being *en rapport*, and to whom he was anxious to demonstrate that the game upon 'the old acres' was still at his mercy; and furthermore, that there existed

no necessity for turning it to account by disposing of it, either for the nourishment of his retainers or to the agent of some enterprising city poulterer. The party consisted of Major O'Houlahan, formerly of the Connaught Rangers, a warrior who had shot snipe within range of the guns at San Sebastian, who was still as keen a sportsman as ever shouldered a Manton or a Rigby, and who persisted in clinging to the old-fashioned muzzle-loader with that fondness with which gentlemen of the olden school hang on to the perfections of their bygone time; Mr. Ajax Burke, a neighbour, very much in the same state of pecuniary embarrassment as his host, and who deemed it prudent to arrive at Ballymaclooney at an hour upon which the most vigilant myrmidon of the law would, in all human probability, be engaged in wooing the drowsy god instead of in the capture of the person of a recalcitrant and wary debtor; and a young gentleman who had just joined the Fusileers, and whose sole occupation in life seemed to be in the operation of vigorously cleansing an eyeglass, and of subsequently sticking it with considerable dexterity into the corner of one eye, and then by way of variety into the other.

It was the night of the 19th of August. Mr. Blake and the Ensign had been on the mountains during the day trying the dogs, and were now engaged in company with the gallant Major and Mr. Ajax Burke in testing the soothing effects of poteen punch. The dogs lay stretched in picturesque attitudes about the room, ever and anon indulging in short spasmodic yelps or jerky groans; whilst gamebags, leggings, and gun-cases of all sorts, shapes, sizes, and descriptions strewed the polished oaken floor. Upon a huge sideboard stood the remains of a sirloin of beef; beside it a well-hacked ham, surrounded by the skeletons of once well-to-do capons; and crowning all an enormous wooden bowl full of potatoes, struggling manfully to emancipate themselves from their tattered jackets.

'This is good stuff, Jim,' observed Major O'Houlahan, taking a tremendous pull at the punch; 'this is the real hardware.'

'I'm glad you like it, Bob,' replied the host; 'it was made on Paddy Mulligan's patch.'

'Paddy's a knowing card,' said the Major approvingly. 'They tell this story of him: Paddy was disposing of some of this delicious stuff to a Scotch fellow, who was fishing at Glendalough, and whom he knew to be safe.

"Can you get me two gallons, Paddy?" said Sawney.

"Twinty, av it's plazing to yer honor," says Paddy.

"Two will do me: how much am I to pay you per gallon?" The Scotch chap thought it would be about five or six shillings.

"Fifteen shillings a gallon, an no less."

"Fifteen shillings, Paddy! Why, that's an enormous price!"

"True for you, sir, but I can't help it;" and here scratching his

head and looking from under the corner of his eye, he added, "I can't help it, yer honour; shure, the duty's riz."'

When the laughter that followed the narration of this episode in the career of Mr. Patrick Mulligan had subsided, Mr. Claybridge, of the Fusileers, having carefully cleansed and screwed his eyeglass into the extreme corner of his left eye, where it depended for its retention upon two very watery and weak-looking lashes, addressed the general company with the query, 'Who the doose is Paddy Mulligan?'

'A tenant of mine,' replied the host. 'He has a lease for ever and pays no rent.'

'And calls it tenant right,' added Mr. Ajax Burke.

'Do you mean to say, Blake, that you get no rent from him?'

'Most indubitably I do.'

'Do you try?'

'Try! You might as well be endeavouring to extract the back tooth out of an ostrich.'

'Most extraordinary!' muttered Mr. Claybridge, letting his eyeglass fall upon the table with a click like the cocking of a pistol.

'Are the birds plenty, Jim?' asked Mr. Ajax Burke.

'As plenty as marked writs.'

'By Jove, that looks well, Jim! Did the dogs work well?'

'Never saw finer setting. Old Flint, there, said the word "mark" as sure as I'm a born Christian.'

'Troth, I had an old bitch that used to count the birds; and if one of us missed a shot, she'd turn round and groan on him.'

'Do you remember the old cock grouse that dodged us last season, Jim?' asked the Major, mixing his fifth tumbler.

'I think Tom Bodkin bagged him and ate him, for he got a cruel fit of indigestion during the winter.'

'That reminds me of old Billy Lynch's snipe,' said Mr. Burke.

'Billy Lynch's snipe?' said the Ensign inquiringly, preparing the eyeglass.

'Yes, sir, Billy Lynch's snipe. Billy was always rheumatic at the wrong time. He never got over the ball in the hip the morning he was out with Anthony Blake; but he left poor Anthony's measure on the daisies. Well, sir, Billy liked his shooting, provided it was easy and convenient, and took it as regularly as his ten tumblers. He happened to invite a friend from Dublin down to Shinnagh, and, of course, they went out shooting. They hadn't gone many perches from the house when up went a snipe; the friend raised his gun, pulled the trigger, but Billy tilted the barrel into the air.

"Hello!" cries his friend.

"Blur an ages! what are you doing at all, at all?" shouts Billy.

"What am I doing? I was firing at a snipe, and would have

bagged him if you hadn't caused me to fire in the air," said his friend in a huff.

"What! Hang it, man, that's *my* snipe," says Billy.

"*Your* snipe, Mr. Lynch?"

"Yes, *my* snipe; and I wouldn't have a hair on his head touched for a pot of money."

"I don't understand you, Mr. Lynch," said his friend, huffier than ever.

"Why, man alive, I've been firing at that snipe all the winter; and I expect he'll last me three winters to come."'

Down went the eyeglass of the Ensign with a click. If he could but recollect these stories for the delectation of the mess, he was a made man.

'Boys,' said Mr. Blake, as the witching hour approached, 'I don't want to spoil sport, but *I* intend to hear the grouse crow before daylight on Ballymavourneen mountain, and I'll take my night-cap.'

The night-cap consisted of a double-shotted tumbler of the poteen punch.

'I don't believe in getting up in the middle of the night,' growled the Major.

'I always take it easy,' said Mr. Ajax Burke; 'I like my breakfast and my smoke, and then my shooting.'

'O, doose take early hours, they're only fit for housemaids,' added Mr. Claybridge.

'As I said before, boys, there's the stuff—there's the sugar. I couldn't get tick for the lemons—they're ready money—so be soft on them; and the more hot water you use, the worse will be the punch. I'm off. I'll have a prize bag long before you are out of your beds. If any of you like to come, Paudheen will shake you up.'

'We're going to have supper and a song, Jim; don't beat such a shabby retreat,' cried the Major.

But Mr. James Burke Bodkin Joyce Blake was as good as his word, and left them to their potations amid a whirlwind of indignant remonstrance.

The mists were clearing off the mountains, and the gray dawn was breaking as Mr. Blake emerged from Ballymaclooney. Beneath his left arm reposed his faithful gun, in front of him joyously gambolled a dog that never yet was known to miss a point, and behind him a boy carrying a huge bag wherein to convey the spoils of the chase.

Half-an-hour's walking placed the party upon the happy hunting grounds, so judiciously selected on the previous evening; and away went the dog at the rate of twenty-five miles an hour within a radius of as many yards.

The dog pauses—stops, lifts its head in the air, stiffens its tail,

and becomes as rigid as though 'twere transformed into bronze. Mr. Blake walks up to him, and whispers to him, 'Go on.'

The dog, as if on wires, moves a little forward.

Frisch! Up go the birds.

Bang! bang!

'Mark!' cries Mr. Blake to the boy; and proceeds to reload as coolly as though he had been discharging the barrels for the purpose of cleaning them.

'Two an' a half brace—illigant birds. Begorra, ye done that well!' said the boy exultingly.

'Did you mark the birds, Paudheen?'

'Yes, sir; they lighted in the clamp beyant the bridge.'

'We'll take them coming back, Paudheen.'

Away went the dog across the heath—now to the right, now to the left, now behind, now in front—Blake and the boy following. They had reached a point where it became necessary to cross a boreen, *alias* a small bridle-path, when two men were perceived approaching from the direction of the main road.

'Poachers,' thought Blake; 'and yet they have nothing to poach with. Travellers? Ah, I have it! Reapers on their way to Dublin by Galway for the English harvest.'

The boy, as soon as he caught a glimpse of them, placed his fingers to his mouth and blew a long, loud, and peculiar whistle.

'Masther Jim'—for by this appellation Mr. Blake was known and invariably addressed by his retainers—'thim's sthrangers comin up the boreen.'

'How do you know, Mick?'

'They didn't give me the return whistle, sir.'

'They're reapers on their way to Galway, Mick.'

'Mebbe so, yer honour. I'll soon know that.'

The boy bounded across the hill-side, and confronting the newcomers, addressed them in Irish. The men looked puzzled, and one of them asked the lad if he spoke English.

'I have a little English,' said the boy.

'We've lost our way, and want a guide.'

'Where are yez goin to?'

'This is the place. We don't know how to say the word,' said the elder, a crafty-looking gray-headed little man, producing a railway guide from his pocket.

'I can't read,' said the boy rather disdainfully.

'I thought as much,' muttered the little gray-headed man.

'May be that gentleman could over there?'

'Av course he can tell yez av he has a mind to do it,' replied the boy proudly.

'What's that, Paudheen?' demanded Blake, still in the distance, but whose curiosity was somewhat aroused.

J. Proctor, del. J. R. Battershell, sc.

"THEM'S STHRANGERS COMING UP."

'Two travellers that's lost their way, sir,' cried the little gray-headed man, advancing towards Mr. Blake. 'Maybe you would tell us, as we're fairly bothered by this railway guide.'

There was an air of such plausibility about the tone of the speaker that Blake was duly impressed by it; and with that obliging spirit which lent itself to anything—from backing bills to placing any or all of his worldly possessions at the disposal of his friends—he handed his gun to the boy, desiring him to follow the dog till he joined him, whilst he proceeded to endeavour to explore the labyrinths of the railway ready reckoner.

Samson, Samson! the Philistines are upon thee!

'Your name is James Burke Bodkin Joyce Blake. Consider yourself the Queen's prisoner,' said the little elderly man, placing his hand upon Blake's shoulder.

'O holy fiddle!' blurted James Burke Bodkin Joyce Blake.

The bailiff, in a few brief but pointed words, explained his mission, and hoped that anything that had occurred, and anything that was likely to occur, would be only viewed in the light of business.

Blake saw that he was entrapped—that resistance was useless. For a second he thought of the gun, and of defence à l'outrance—of a rush in the direction of Ballymaclooney—of a rescue; but overcome by the sudden and utterly unexpected coup-de-main, he mentally and physically yielded to the situation, and quietly resigned himself to his fate.

'We are sorry for it, Mr. Blake, but we're only doing our duty, and we hope you'll not be contrairy with us.'

Blake said nothing; in the full flush of his newly-fledged misery words were denied him. His heart, which but a few moments before had bounded so lightly beneath his Irish frieze waistcoat, now seemed to lie flabbily underneath the soles of his hob-nailed boots. He who had so long held the myrmidons of the law at bay; he who had but to remain within the four walls of Ballymaclooney and defy the whole aggressive engines of the law; he whose boast it was, that whilst Burkes and Bodkins and Joyces fell by the score, he, like unto Horatius of old, held good the bridge;—and now to fall so clumsily, and yet so heavily, was simply crushing, overwhelming.

'We'd better take across the mountain, Mister Gogarty,' observed the younger bailiff in a low tone. 'The less we meet in these parts the better.'

Adopting this prudent suggestion of his confrère, the party struck across the heath in the direction of the sea.

It has been observed that the Boulevard des Italiens would be about the most uninviting and dreary spot on the face of the earth, if a man were compelled to walk up and down its glittering

trottoirs in the hope of meeting some person from whom to borrow the price of his dinner.

The splendid view that burst upon the sight of the party treading the mountain's brow on that memorable August morning produced no enlivening effect whatever upon the mind of Jim Blake. The exquisite pale-gold tints of the rising sun; the purple gloom of the valleys; the gauzy-white mists, like semi-transparent veils, revealing yet concealing the beauties they would and would not disclose; the bright blue sky above his head, and the carpet of crisp verdure beneath his feet,—all, all were unheeded, for black despair, like Poe's raven, was sitting grimly at the portals of his heart, and the glories of the scene were marred by the shadows of the human ghouls into whose remorseless claws he had so unhappily and so helplessly fallen.

They had not proceeded more than a couple of miles when the refrain of a song, chanted in a rich male voice, was borne towards them on the morning breeze; and presently, from the direction of the sound, the form of a man, engaged in digging potatoes, and who was endeavouring to lighten his labour by the judicious introduction of melody, disclosed itself.

'Are you sure of your road, Mr. Gogarty?' asked the younger bailiff.

'I am not. We must make for Leenan, to ketch the car.'

'The constabulary sergeant told me that the bridge was knocked into smithereens below Ballycolligawn. It would be better to ask for the best ford.'

At this moment the man in the potato-ridges perceived them, and raising one hand to his eyes, so as to screen them from the glare of the now blazing sun, gazed earnestly and intently for a few seconds; then extricating the spade from the embrace of mother earth, and flinging it across his shoulder—the blade glittering in the sunlight like polished silver—approached them with rapid and vigorous strides.

'Tell us the easiest way to cross to the high-road to Leenan,' said the younger bailiff, addressing himself to the approaching figure.

'O, mother o' Moses! is this you I see in it, Masther Jim?' exclaimed the man.

Blake made no response.

'Had ye good divarshin, sir? I heered some shots, and the birds is plinty.' Then drawing closer, he almost whispered, in Irish, 'You're in thrubble, sir?'

Blake nodded.

'Bit at last, Masther Jim?'

Another nod.

'Shall I do it at wanst, sir?'

'Do what?'

'Say the word, an I'll level the pair o' them wud this,' giving the spade an ominous and threatening jerk as he spoke.

For a moment Blake felt almost inclined to accept the rescue, but prudence held him back.

'No, Paddy; not that way.'

'Lave it to me, Masther Jim.'

'No violence.'

'Shure, yer not goin free an aisey, Masther Jim?'

'I can't help it, Mulligan.'

'Blur an ages! ye'll make a fight for it?'

Blake shook his head negatively.

'Wirra, wirra! But the ould masther would have down'd two spalpeens like thim wud a clout av his fist. Say the word, for the luv av heaven, Masther Jim, an I'll make thim sup sorrow, the varmints,' exclaimed Mulligan entreatingly, and clutching his spade in a vice-like grip.

'Please to stir yourself, Mr. Blake,' cried the elder bailiff uneasily. 'We've a long way to go.'

'Won't ye let me murther thim, Masther Jim?' asked Mulligan, still in Irish.

'I'll have no violence, under any pretext whatever.'

'He's daft,' muttered the peasant. 'He's mad, divil a doubt of it; but mad or no mad, he'll not go to the jug if Paddy Mulligan can stop him.'

The party had resumed their march, Blake jealously guarded on either side by the bailiffs.

Paddy Mulligan stood for a few moments in an attitude of one who thinks profoundly; then, flinging aside his spade, followed the party, and sidling alongside of Blake, muttered with great earnestness:

'Masther Jim, for the love of Mary spake to me, and thrate me as if I wor a dog. Do this, and sumethin will cum of it.'

Blake assented without exactly knowing why, feeling that any attempt at escape would be utterly and hopelessly fruitless.

'Yez want the best foord, sir?' he asked of the bailiff Gogarty.

'Yes, we want the best ford, my man,' responded that individual, glancing suspiciously at the new-comer.

'I don't know much av the place meself, but I can ax here below in the valley. So the masther's in thrubble?' he added in a confidential tone.

'O, he'll get out of it quick enough,' said the bailiff; 'he has friends.'

'Divil a wan!'

'Not friends?'

'Divil a wan! He's not liked, an' I'll tell ye why.'

The bailiff dropped a little in the rear.

'He's a gripin hard-hearted man. Sorra a boy in the land but is rack-rinted, an bet up for the rint; and if he hasn't it, out he goes, wud no bed but the bog, and no roof but the sky.'

'That's bad.'

'Bad, begorra! he's worse nor a Turk. He's hated like ould Nick, and it's lucky for him there's no hedges in these parts, or he'd find a bullet floppin into his heart, some fine evenin, from behind wan av thim.'

'I always heard he was a decent man,' observed the bailiff.

'That's the way! Dacent man! There's not a man, woman, or child that wud lift a finger for him betune this and Galway av he was going to the gallows.'

'What was he saying to you, then, awhile ago?' asked Gogarty, with a keen glance.

'Axin me for to go to Westport, and give the word to his brother that he was in thrubble, for to come for to bail him.'

This answer, so readily given, and seemingly so plausible, dispelled any doubts as to the sincerity of Paddy Mulligan's intentions, and Gogarty hastened to inform his fellow practitioner, who received the information approvingly.

The sun had burst out with unusual splendour, and the heat became almost unendurable. Blake divested himself of his coat and cravat, which he handed to Paddy, desiring him, in a brutal and surly tone, to carry them.

The bailiffs exchanged glances. They, too, removed their own coats, for the heat was broiling.

'It's desperate hot,' observed Gogarty to his companion, 'and these coats is desperate heavy.'

'I'll carry thim for the price av a pint as far as I'm goin,' said Mulligan carelessly.

The legal gentlemen gladly availed themselves of the offer, and handed the articles in question to Paddy, who threw them across his shoulder with the utmost possible nonchalance.

The party proceeded for some distance in silence, each full of his own thoughts, and ostensibly not caring to give them utterance.

'Yez never cotched a man in these parts afore?' observed Mulligan to the elder bailiff.

'Not here, but we have in other places, my man. It's hard to do *me;* eh, Gogarty?'

'Not *to* be done,' responded Gogarty; and turning to Paddy Mulligan, he graciously informed him that Mr. Smith was the keenest hand in the profession.

'Do you remember the time I worked the gent that lived on the canal, Gogarty?'

'Ha! ha! ha! indeed I do, Mr. Smith;' and, turning to Mul-

ligan, Mr. Gogarty proceeded: 'We were after a gent that lived on the canal; a soft-hearted man, but 'cute—devilish 'cute; and though we tried to serve him in every way, he managed to do us; till one night, Mr. Smith here dressed up as a female, and pretended to fall into the canal, just at the time our man was smoking his pipe in the parlour-window. Out he runs, pulls Smith out of the water, and Smith—ha! ha! ha!—arrests him on the spot. You never saw a chap so astonished.'

'My father did a 'cuter thing than that,' observed the elder bailiff, warming upon the topic.

'Begorra, that was knowin enough, anyhow!' observed Paddy.

'My father was sent down to Castlebar, to pick up a Captain Bodkin, that swore to make any process-server that came near him eat the process, and then that he'd roast him before a slow fire. My father knew his business, and his employers knew *him*, and they sent him down. He surveyed the premises; a lonely house, out on a hill, with windows on every side of it. "I'm done," says he. "I may go back with my finger in my mouth;" and he was turning away when he spies a tree, and a thought struck him. He had a bit of a rope in his pocket, and just as the day was dawning he climbed the tree, and he hung himself.'

'He what?' asked Mulligan.

'Hung himself.'

'Arrah baithershin!'

'It's a fact; he hung himself to the tree, but only by the arms —not by the neck—and gave one or two great screeches. My bold Captain gets out of bed, looks out of the window, and sees my father hanging, but kicking lively. He runs out, and before you could say Jack Robinson, my father let himself down and served him. Wasn't that clever?'

'Great practice!' cried Mr. Gogarty enthusiastically. 'That man ought to have been presented with a piece of plate by the profession.'

'Phew! it's murdhrin' hot!' observed Mulligan, wiping his forehead, from which the perspiration was flowing in rivulets. 'I'm as dhry as a cuckoo! Begorra, there's a house; maybe I'd get a sup of wather;' and he started in the direction of a small wretched-looking cabin standing in a hollow, in utter isolation.

'Come back with the coats!' cried Grogarty, about to follow in pursuit.

'He has Mr. Blake's—so ours is safe,' said the elder bailiff.

'Don't be alarmed, that man wouldn't steal the weight of a pin's head,' exclaimed Blake, breaking the silence in defence of his follower. 'He'll be back in a moment, I'll answer for him.'

Paddy Mulligan remained longer in the sheeling than was absolutely necessary for the slaking of the thirst of any ordinary human

being, and the bailiffs were beginning to feel uneasy with reference to their outer garments, when he reappeared, the articles in question hanging across his arm.

'Bad cess to it for wather! Ye'd think it was goold that I axed for,' he muttered, as he rejoined them. 'Stingy naygurs, I'm dhrier nor ever.'

They resumed their journey, and quitting the hill-side entered a lonely valley, along which the road ran like a chalk line drawn by a gentleman under the influence of delirium tremens. On either side huge gaunt-looking crags towered above them, and no sound broke the stillness save the tramp, tramp of their own footsteps.

At the extreme end of the valley a small square building stood in bold relief.

'I know my road now,' said the elder bailiff, with a joyous chuckle; 'that's the revenue officer's quarters.'

'Thrue for you, sir,' observed Paddy; 'but don't go too near to him, nearer nor the roar av a bull, for he wouldn't ax betther divarshin nor to run yez.'

'We've the law on our side,' said Gogarty.

'So has he, sir. He's a divil. Ah! there she is, at last,' he added, in a low tone, and a glow of triumph passed over his swarthy features.

Far in the distance, a small patch of red was seen moving rapidly in the direction of the habitation. Paddy Mulligan's keen eye recognised in that almost invisible speck, the petticoat of that peculiar hue only to be seen in the Western Highlands.

'In troth she didn't let the grass grow undher her feet. If she gives the message right, these chaps'll be laughin at the wrong side av their dirty mouths.'

Half an hour's marching brought them in front of the bleak-looking mansion, in which her Majesty's officer of excise was holding his temporary head-quarters. The neighbouring districts had acquired a very distinguished notoriety on account of the quality and quantity of the 'mountain dew' manufactured therein, and it was deemed expedient by the authorities to honour the enterprising but speculative distillers with the special recognition of a benign and paternal government, in pursuance of which Mr. Fisher, the revenue officer, was requested to take up his abode in this isolated valley, with a view to being on the spot in the event of any attempt at exportation on a large or extensive scale being ventured upon.

The revenue officer hailed them as they were in the act of passing.

'Come along,' urged Paddy Mulligan to the bailiffs. 'He's up for mischief, an he'd shoot us like crows. Here, take yer coats. I wouldn't have them about me for fear he'd think I stole thim.'

The bailiffs took possession of their respective garments, and

were for hurrying onwards, when the voice of Mr. Fisher bade them stand.

Paddy had sidled close to Blake, and while the officers were deliberating as to what course they should adopt, whispered almost into his ear:

'I sint him a message from the sheeling beyant that ye cotch two smugglers. Stick to this, an yer out of their claws.'

'Mr. Blake, will you be good enough to step this way?' said the revenue officer; and turning to the bailiffs, 'Remain where you are. I am led to believe,' continued Mr. Fisher, without permitting Blake to open his lips, 'that you have been fortunate enough to detect these persons in the act of conveying samples of illicit distillation with a view to carrying on illicit traffic.'

'What does he mean?' asked the elder bailiff.

'How do I know?' responded the younger.

'And I am further led to believe, that they have the samples about their persons.'

'I beg your pardon, sir,' interposed the elder bailiff; 'but if you mean *us*, you're mistaken—we are sheriff's officers in the employment of Mr. Binks of Dublin, and have come down here to arrest Mr. Blake at his suit.'

'A very plausible story, truly, but if my information be correct, how do you account for the possession of the samples of illicit distillation?'

'Samples! we have no samples — we know nothing about samples.'

'Be careful, now; take care of what you are saying.'

'We can't be more careful,' said Gogarty, a little nervously.

'We have nothing to be careful about,' added Smith, in a tone of irritation.

'You will permit my men to search your persons.'

'Of course.'

'Here, Johnson, search these men for samples of *poteen*.'

A member of the revenue force appeared at the summons, and proceeded to pass his hands over the persons of the process-servers, but without making any discovery of the mountain dew.

'Nothing here, sir.'

A glance of triumphant innocence illuminated the faces of the suspected culprits.

'Ye needn't have given yourselves the trouble,' exclaimed Smith, 'and if you make many mistakes like this, your promotion will be slow. Now, Mr. Blake,' he added, 'if *you* please. We must catch the car at Leenan.'

The revenue officer seemed somewhat disconcerted, and looked significantly at Paddy Mulligan, who instantly pointed in the direc-

tion of the greatcoats, which he had surrendered to Messrs. Smith and Gogarty.

'Try these greatcoats,' said Mr. Fisher authoritatively.

The man obeyed.

'Here,' said Smith, 'turn the pockets inside out—eh, what's this?'

From the inner pocket the neck of a black bottle protruded. The searcher seized it, drew the cork, placed the orifice to his nose, and cried in stentorian tones,

'*Poteen*, be the mortial!'

Smith grew very white.

'I know nothing of this—I never saw it; somebody put it there. I never drank a drop of poteen in my life.'

'Search the other man!' said Mr. Fisher sternly.

Mr. Gogarty saved the official all trouble in the matter by producing a bottle similar in appearance and in contents to the other.

'Can *you* account for the possession of this sample?'

'I cannot, sir. I never heard of such a thing. It was put there by somebody. It's not mine. I disown it. I know nothing about it. It's most extraordinary.'

'It will be better for you both, my good fellows, to give information to the government. You have been taken red-handed. Who are your confederates? Where is the still? I shall hold you harmless, and perhaps be entitled to obtain a reward for you, if you make a clean breast of it.'

'We have no confederates—we know nothing about it. It's a conspiracy, a plant!' cried the two bailiffs in chorus.

'Then you will *not* make a clean breast of it?'

'We can't make a clean breast of what we know nothing.'

'Then it becomes my duty to send you to gaol.'

'Send us to gaol?' asked Smith insolently.

'Yes.'

'I'd like to see you do it, or all the gaugers in Connaught.'

'So you shall.'

'We are here on business, and we have a prisoner, and I call on you to help me to carry out the law.'

'I call upon you, my fine fellow, to account for having in your possession this illicit liquor.'

'I told you I can't.'

'That will not satisfy me, and until I have proof positive of your innocence, I must treat you as though you were guilty.'

'I'll go before the nearest magistrate and make an affidavit.'

'You can make as many as you like, but in the mean time consider yourselves prisoners.'

'You'll repent this,' said Smith, livid with rage.

'Perhaps so, but at present I must confine myself to the black letter of my duty.'

'Slope, sir, for the love av heaven—now's yer time,' said Paddy Mulligan, addressing himself in Irish to Blake, who stood an astonished spectator of the scene.

Blake saw the force of the observation, and resolved upon acting on it.

'These scoundrels,' he exclaimed, 'passed themselves off as process-servers, and I find they are nothing better than vagabond smugglers. What an ass to have been duped by such ruffians! I'm delighted you have captured them, Mr. Fisher, and I can bear testimony that you have only acted as becomes your duty.'

'Thanks, Mr. Blake. I wish you good-morning and good sport.'

'Good-morning, Mr. Fisher;' and James Burke Bodkin Joyce Blake, accompanied by Paddy Mulligan, turned in the direction of Ballymaclooney.

'Are ye going to deprive us of our rights, to help to rescue our prisoner?' gasped Smith.

'I don't care a d—— for your prisoner. I wouldn't believe either of you on your oath. Come, get into the house. I shall send you under escort to Westport.'

'In troth, sir,' said Paddy to the exulting Blake as they proceeded towards the Castle, 'I was nigh bet up be the delay at Miles Byrnes's. He had to run thirty perch to the still for the sperrit, and I was afeared he'd be seen. 'Twas his little girl that gev me message to Mr. Fisher, and now glory be to God yer as safe as the Rock av Cashil!'

NUGENT ROBINSON.

GRISELDA

A Study at the Princess's Theatre

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

I HAVE a sufficiently rooted objection to be present at the First Night of the performance of a new piece—be it a five-act tragedy or the flimsiest of farces; and my reluctance in this regard is based mainly on the probability that the house will be inconveniently crowded, and that my neighbours in the stalls may be, on the one side, somebody who passionately admires the author of the new piece, and dins the praises of his talents and virtues into your ears from the beginning to the end of the play; while, on the other, sits somebody who hates the dramatist at present on his trial, and abuses and vilifies him from the rising of the curtain to the final descent thereof. A more important reason, impelling me to stay away from theatres on the occasions I have mentioned, lies in the fact that it is next door to impossible on a First Night to tell whether the play is good or bad, and whether it is really to the taste of the public. The *real* public are scarcely represented in the house at all, to begin with. When I was young, the wholesome practice prevailed of damning. Nowadays no play is damned; no, not to the worst. New pieces are generally produced on a Saturday night, and next morning we are pretty sure to read in the *Sunday Buster* that Mr. Tagrag's new melodrama or Mr. Rubbitch's new burlesque-extravaganza was received at the Theatre Royal Rosemary-lane, or the Royal Atrocity Theatre, with the utmost enthusiasm by a crowded and fashionable audience; that the author, in response to the rapturous plaudits of the public, bowed his acknowledgments from a private box, or crossed the stage under a shower of bouquets; and that the principal actors and actresses were successively called before the curtain to receive their due meed of approbation. It is as likely as not that the *Sunday Buster's* critic is—as critics go, which is not far—as honest a fellow as need be. He has been obliged, at the close of the performance on Saturday night, to scribble, in the most desperate of hurries, a column or a column and a half of 'copy:' the wonder is that, under the circumstances, the poor devil of a dramatic critic gets through his work at all. If he be a conscientious scribe, and has waited for the piece to be performed before writing his notice thereof, he is placed at a hundred disadvantages. He goes to his toil at an unhallowed hour, jaded and fagged with too much gaslight, too much sitting in the stalls and chattering in the lobbies; so much of everything, in fact, that can conduce to-

wards enfeebling a man's body and muddling his brain. Anyhow, he is rowing against wind and tide, and writing against time. The books he would like to consult are not by his side. Not an extra moment is allowed to him to polish his sentences or even to assure himself that those sentences are correctly constructed; and, for the moment, he is Isaac Laquedem—a Wandering Jew of journalism, with 'Va toujours!' remorselessly thundering on his tympanum. The column or the column and a half *must* be done, or the *Sunday Buster* will lose its prestige as a dramatic 'organ;' and the critic scrambles through his drudgery somehow.

These were the principal grounds for my stopping away from the First Night of the production at the Princess's Theatre of *Griselda*, a drama, in four acts, written by M. E. Braddon. I had, I will admit, an uneasy consciousness, on the eve and the morrow of Thursday the 13th of November, that in absenting myself from the well-remembered house in Oxford-street I had failed in my duty; not because I had anything to do with dramatic criticism as a trade, but because, as a man of letters, I was bound to do my utmost to support the efforts of a distinguished literary colleague, and because I am a sincere admirer of the histrionic abilities of Mr. and Mrs. Rousby, who sustain the chief characters in *Griselda*. And I might surely have found another warranty for going to Oxford-street in the fact that the authoress of the play is the Conductor of *Belgravia*; that I have known her a great many years, and long before she ever astonished and delighted the world as a writer of fiction; and that I have beheld, with never-ceasing admiration for her courageous industry, her genius dawn and blossom and ripen into a very bright maturity. But I stopped away, nevertheless. There were some minor causes for my absence from the exciting scene. I do not like excitement; having been surfeited long since with that kind of diversion. The whole tenor of one's thoughts, feelings, speech, and action on a First Night are, I take it, as a rule, erroneous. You miss the genuine beauties of the piece, and applaud deliriously or idiotically in the wrong places. You are the greatest ninny in a Paradise of Fools; and when your heart should have been as hard as the nether millstone you discover that your pocket-handkerchief is wet through with tears. Moreover, I should have been obliged to beg a stall from the manager—it seems to be a matter of etiquette on first nights that nobody pays—I should have been bound to put on evening dress; to grin ghastly recognitions to two hundred people for whom I do not care twopence; to meet Gumbo Toothly, the man who never stays away from a First Night; to say I was glad to see Jack Judas, whom I should like to see boiled in light-brown cod-liver oil—how the wretch would frizzle!—to confront Mrs. Pelham Villars, who has thrice asked me to dinner, and whom I have thrice thrown over (was it my fault that I had the gout, that I was on the west coast of Africa, and in the

'Little Ease' of the Tower of London, when her polite invitations arrived?). And, finally, I should have been in common decency bound, in the course of the evening, to wait on the Authoress in her Box, and say something civil to her. I need scarcely remark that I have long since ceased to say anything civil to anybody, and that I do not intend to resume the practice of a futile and hollow-hearted conventionality.

So *Griselda* was four nights old before I went to listen to the pathetic tale of her patience, and the treasury of the Princess's Theatre was the better for the sum of three shillings—plus sixpence given to an obliging attendant for a programme and a front seat—which I paid for admission to the upper boxes of the dramatic temple in Oxford-street. I suppose that I lost caste by sitting in the upper boxes. Gumbo Toothly, had he been in the stalls, where most he does resort, might have surveyed me pityingly through his double-barrelled opera-glass, and opined that by mounting so high up in the world I was coming down in it. Mrs. Pelham Villars *always* has a private box. She won't ask me to dinner any more now that she knows that I frequent the upper boxes. A person who so derogates is manifestly unworthy to be accounted a member of her distinguished 'set.' For myself I didn't think that I had derogated or lost caste by purchasing a modest three shillings' worth of entertainment, and going up two pairs of stairs to enjoy it; and this conviction was strengthened in my mind by the circumstance that when I handed my pasteboard talisman to the gentleman at the wicket on the first landing, there flashed across my mind the recollection that once upon a time—the authoress of *Griselda* may have been in a short frock and trousers about that period—I served a brief apprenticeship to the art and mystery of taking checks on the upper-box landing of the Princess's Theatre. 'We never know what we may come to,' says the trite old popular proverb. If I might be allowed to give a slightly Hibernian converse to the locution, it would be to the effect that we seldom choose to know what we have come from.

The farce of the *Sleeping Draught* had not terminated when I entered the theatre; so I gave my mind to the perusal of the playbill, in which, in a few modest and well-chosen sentences, M. E. Braddon reminded her constituents that the story of Patient Griselda had enjoyed a world-wide popularity during more than six hundred years—she might have said for more than a thousand—that, according to Foresti and other authorities, Griselda is not an imaginary personage — but that she lived in the eleventh century, her history having been written, shortly after her death, in a book called *Le Parement des Dames*. I read that Boccaccio, whose story of Griselda is told in the Tenth Day of the *Decameron*, sent it, with his duty, to Petrarch, who in return sent his compliments, remarking that he had read the tale long ago. I was informed

that 'Marie de France,' a celebrated poetess of the thirteenth century (Marie was, I suspect, a Monk, who dedicated his collection of tales to a royal princess, calling it *Les Délices de Madame Marie de France*), wrote a story identical in plot with Griselda, but under another name; that Petrarch made a Latin translation of the story as *Griseldis*, which Ludovico Dolce retranslated into Italian; that Chaucer had the stirring narrative from Petrarch himself (the Clerk of Oxenforde, in the *Canterbury Tales*, *says* that he so had it, but he was manifestly joking: *a beau mentir qui vient de loin*); that an anonymous English author subsequently paraphrased the Chaucerian clerk's story under the title of *Gualterus and Grisalda;* that Shakespeare, in the *Taming of the Shrew*, and Cotton, in his collaboration to Izaak Walton's *Complete Angler*, both mention poor meek little Grissel; that the fable, at least, of the drama is likewise repeated in the ballads of the 'Nut-brown Maid' and 'Henry and Emma,'—to these might be added 'King Cophetua and the Beggar-maid;'—and there is even a *soupçon* of Grissel in the 'Lord of Burleigh' and 'Godiva;' that Chettle, Dekker, and Haughton conjointly wrote a drama on the same theme; that we have a comedy by Radcliffe called *Patient Griseld;* that the Italians Apostolo Leno and Goldoni, and the German Hans Sachs, have all taken liberties with the much-enduring little lady, for dramatic purposes; and that Legrand d'Aussy tells us that he had seen more than twenty different stories for children, involving the main features of the Griseldean *epopæa*, in the French, German, Italian, Spanish, Swedish, and Dutch languages. Had Herr Sachs been an Orientalist he might have read the touching story of a man's brutality and a woman's long-suffering in Sanskrit, in Persian, in Tamil, and in Urdu—nay, even in Chinese. There is likewise a doubt in my mind as to whether Punch was not originally twin-brother to Gualterus, and whether Judy is not, under many aspects, a type of Patient Grissel. But, *basta!* an we do not stop in our bibliographical career we shall be bruising our shins against Apuleius and the *Gesta Romanorum*,—to say nothing of the *Arabian Nights*, which, so scholars say, are chiefly founded on a series of tales written in diffuse Byzantine Greek, by learned Anna Comnenà, for the amusement of her father in his dotage. Whence did that Czarevna get her store? From the Lost Lies of Herodotus, perchance, or that choice collection of Plutarch's Merry Tales, destroyed when the contents of the library of the Ptolemies were carted off to feed the ovens and heat the flues of the public baths of Alexandria.

Irrespective of the information conveyed in the programme, the omniscient dramatic critics have been kind enough to tell us that in the year 1828, and from the same parent Boccaccian stock, was produced at old Covent Garden Theatre a play called *Woman's Love, or the Trial of Patience*, in which Charles Kemble, Bartley, and Mrs.

Vining appeared; and that more than thirty years afterwards, during the management of the Princess's Theatre by Mr. Charles Kean, a drama on the subject of *Griselda*, written by the accomplished Mr. Edwin Arnold, was within an ace of being produced at the selfsame house where Miss Braddon's *Griselda* is now being performed. It is, nevertheless, passing strange that none of the erudite and omniscient bibliographers should have discovered that in a certain *quasi*-epic poem entitled the *Idyls of the King*, and in the particular idyl called 'Enid,' Mr. Alfred Tennyson has very intelligently and eloquently set forth a story which, to all intents and purposes, is the story of Patient Grissel.

But the play's the thing; and on that I will now proceed to dwell. Everybody knows the legend of Griselda as narrated by Boccaccio, and after him by Chaucer. It is simple, crude, even to the revolting coarseness of *una matta bestialità*—a piece of mad brutishness, as it was stigmatised by one of the novelist's own hearers. It is the tale of the wanton but deliberate cruelty of a ruffianly and tyrannical nobleman towards a weak, unoffending, and inoffensive woman, and of that woman's almost superhuman long-suffering and placability. Miss Braddon has, I think, very wisely softened the ruffianism of Gualtiero, and has transferred some portion of his repulsiveness to an ideal cousin Cosmo; and (quite as judiciously, to my thinking) she has shrunk from portraying on the stage the well-nigh supernatural meekness of Griselda. Only one personage of that kind has ever been produced on the boards—the *Virgin Martyr* of Massinger; and in that exquisite play the poet is so conscious of Dorothea being too good for this gross earth, that he is fain to back her up periodically during her trials with an applauding chorus of angels. Griselda is a martyr, and of a very angelic constitution too; but as her ultimate apotheosis, in conjunction with a display of the lime-light, and a group of 'extra' ballet ladies strapped to iron supports among pasteboard clouds, is not a dénouement contemplated by Miss Braddon, she has made of her heroine a thoroughly womanly woman, who can bear, and will bear, a great deal, but who will not forget on occasion to tell you how much she has borne, and how wicked and cruel it is in you to ill-treat her so. You remember the passionate query of the wife in *No Song, no Supper:*

> 'Are women for no use meant,
> But merely man's amusement,
> To tease and to torture as they will?'

This is Griselda's way of looking at it. She is willing enough to kiss the rod, poor child; but she occasionally makes a snap, approaching the vicious in its vivacity, at the hand that wields the scourge. On the eternal subject of the Pope of Rome—a subject which, I daresay, has divided husband and wife from the time of St. Peter to

that of Mr. and Mrs. Griffith Gaunt downwards—Griselda gives Gualtiero a very unmistakable 'bit of her mind,' nor does her repudiation of papal interference in the concerns of our hearths and homes fail to bring down the house in several salvoes of ultra-Protestant applause nightly. Miss Braddon's heroine is, in fact, a worm that is continually being trodden upon in a most unconscionable manner, but who will turn—and turn too with an amount of justly indignant spirit rather calculated to make the tyrant man shake in his shoes. Suppose that Mr. Thackeray's Rawdon Crawley, in *Vanity Fair*, had been merely a gambler, a profligate, a duellist, and a rascal, and without any of the genial and tender qualities with which the great novelist has tempered the asperity of the insolvent guardsman's character—suppose that Captain Crawley, instead of being cozened into a marriage with Becky Sharpe, had elected to espouse Amelia Osborne. That soft, sympathetic, lachrymose stockbroker's daughter would have endured any amount of contumely, any amount of positive ill-usage, from the man she loved. In such a couple you would have had Griselda and Gualtiero, under nineteenth-century conditions, to the life. Amelia would have waited like a slave upon Rawdon. If he came home drunk, she would have knelt down to pull off his muddy boots; had he beaten her, she would simply have whimpered in secret, and repaired to some artistic friend to have her black eyes painted; had he been locked up in gaol for debt, she would have run about from one end of London to the other to beg, borrow, or steal the money to release her darling. Is there not another Amelia—the immortal Amelia of Henry Fielding, who has a considerable admixture of Patient Grissel in her composition? Had not Mrs. Captain Booth an immensity of woe to suffer in her married life? And poor Sophy Weston? Do you think that the matrimonial path of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Jones lay altogether along a highway of roses? Thackeray's Amelia would have borne anything from Rawdon, blows and curses, neglect and infidelity (the most jealous women are generally those who love their husbands least; jealousy *au fond* is a mad jumble of overweening personal vanity and savage envy of other women), but had he laid his hand on her child; had he attempted to abduct her Son from her arms—bless you! the meek and patient Amelia would have risen tremendous in her wrath, and torn the ruffian's eyes out. *Gare aux ongles!* when the little ones are in question. There are meek and patient lionesses, no doubt, who only moan in a submissive manner when their lords come home to the den savage and surly from an unsuccessful antelope-hunt, and bite their partners spitefully in the nape of the neck, or dig their claws into their gaunt sides; but when it comes to the lioness's whelps, hands off, if you please! Madame Leo has teeth and claws of her own; and her mate will howl for it if one of the cubs get so much as a rough pat from the paternal paw.

On similar grounds, (although not quite unreservedly) I think that Miss Braddon has used sound discretion in giving to Gualtiero just one flimsy shred of a shadow of an excuse for outraging his wife's feelings and making her life miserable. One special difficulty lying in the path of husbands who devote themselves, with an energy and assiduity worthy of better things, to the culpable but not undiverting pursuit of ill-using their helpmates is *to know how to begin*. You—I must assume, for the nonce, that you are a Brute—don't know exactly 'when to have' your victim. She is not, like the gambler's servant in the jest-book, 'always tying her shoe.' The rough-and-ready procedure adopted by the wolf towards the lamb in the fable is, in truth, open to you; and the conduct of your mother-in-law, or of your wife's brother, or of her trustees, may often prove a convenient peg on which to hang (*à la* 'Le Loup et l'Agneau') a plea for devouring her; but, perhaps, she may have neither wife, nor brother, nor trustees. She is a mere lonely helpless woman. Brute as you are, you shrink somehow from slashing at a blancmange with a broadsword. With truly feminine keenness of insight Miss Braddon has given to her Marquis of Saluzzo the tiniest rag of a justification for quarrelling with and abusing his spouse. The young Marchioness—as *jeunes marquises* are apt to be—is somewhat too fond of Mr. Benson's jewelry and Mr. Peter Robinson's silks. She doesn't think a hundred and fifty guineas too much for a cashmere shawl; and she has a decided penchant for dresses with trains of aggravated length—Mrs. Rousby wears dresses *à queue* long enough to reach from the Oxford-circus to Hanway-yard—for sealskin mantles, sable muffs, point-lace parasols, and three-guinea bonnets. In a word, La Marchesa di Saluzzo is very extravagant—why should she not be so, seeing that her husband lives in a gorgeous palace, with any amount of carriages and servants, and that she has every reason to believe him to be enormously wealthy? Moreover, the dear kind soul is amazingly charitable—so beneficent, indeed, that one can imagine the whole Charity Organisation Society, with Sir Charles Trevelyan at their head, shaking their heads dolefully at her wildly indiscriminate almsgiving. She entertains a horde of mendicants—shocking old creatures in gaberdines and with long beards, who ought to be packed off forthwith to the workhouse or the treadmill, begging-letter writers, mumpers, cadgers, and male and female tramps, on whom she lavishes the marquis's money with the most inconsiderate liberality. She fondles their dirty little brats, and sows coal, blanket, and soup tickets among them broadcast. It is curious to recall to mind that Mr. Carlyle and M. de Montalembert have given us, in their pictures of the life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, the exact historical counterpart of Miss Braddon's Griselda, from the undiscriminatingly charitable point of view. The Magyar noble was absolutely driven from his house and home, and forced to proceed

to the Crusades, by the persistence with which his sainted wife filled his kitchen, and even his dining-hall and his best bedroom, with a perpetually recurring crowd of beggars, tramps, and other scurvy companions. At all events, in the pardonable prodigality, and the more excusable but still inconvenient charity of Griselda, the Marquis finds that much-wished-for peg to hang persecution upon.

A very gratuitous outcry has been made by uninformed judges against Cosmo, the villain of the piece, on the ground that he is only a weak and stale copy of Iago. I grant the Moor's lieutenant to have been a scoundrel of so pure and perfect a type that he cannot, as regards unmitigated wickedness, be either equalled or surpassed, and it is with the extremest difficulty even that he can be approached; but it is as idle to assume that the Human Comedy comprises only one Iago, as it would be to regard a Machiavelli, a Cæsar Borgia, or a Count Cenci as solitary and unique specimens of human character in the real historic life of mediæval Italy. On the contrary, the Machiavels, the Borgias, the Cencis abounded at the time of which Miss Braddon treats, just as the Podsnaps, the Pecksniffs, the Becky Sharpes, the Pendennises (what an insufferable prig that Arthur Pendennis was!) abound in this age in which I am writing. The authoress has saddled Count Cosmo with a large share of the wickedness which of right belongs to his cousin; and I am bound to admit that the rascal bears his burden very jauntily, and is seemingly capable of being handicapped to a much greater extent. If he be a weak and stale copy of Iago, this Count Cosmo, the very same, and with much greater force and justice, may be said of Sir Walter Scott's Rashleigh Osbaldistone and of Balzac's Madame Marneffe. At least the authoress of *Griselda* has not fallen into the pit which yawned at her feet—she has not fallen into the error which perhaps not one dramatist in fifty would have had the sense and the acumen to avoid—in making Cosmo a melodramatic villain of the conventional kind. Cosmo is a perfectly cool, calm, collected, polished, well-read, well-bred scamp. Only once (when he avows his unholy passion for Griselda) does he talk loud, or assume a more demonstrative demeanour than that which might be normally possessed by a member of the Marlborough Club. He is inexhaustibly fertile in lies, subterfuges, and equivocations; he is stuffed as full as an egg is full of meat of envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness; he would be loth, through dread of the *cavaletto*, to cut, with his own hands, the throats of his relations, or to put strychnine into their *polenta* or morphia into their *Asti spumante*; but he would compass their assassination, and take care they were assassinated in the most efficient and the most gentlemanly manner conceivable. And of such, in thousands of cases, was the character of the pre-Renaissance, and to some extent of the post-Renaissance, Italian *gentiluomo*—especially when he was the poor relation of a powerful noble. The Sire Michael de Montaigne

and our own Courtenay, Earl of Devon, met crowds of such polite and scoundrelly cavaliers when they journeyed into Italy. Only Shakespeare took One Villain, and distilled, refined, rectified, sublimated, and made him immortal as Iago. For the rest, Miss Braddon's Cosmo is, from head to heel, as thoroughly Cinque Cento as a chased tankard by Benvenuto Cellini or a corslet in *niello* by Maso Fineguerra.

A few words only need be bestowed abstractedly on Gualtiero. Cosmo is a dark villain—altogether Latin; whereas you can't help thinking that the Marquis of Saluzzo, his cousin, must have inherited on the maternal side a strain of Teuton blood, and that it is from his remote Gothic or Vandalic ancestry that he draws much of his ruffianly perversity and downright cruelty. The actor, sensibly following the authoress's subtle implication, has in 'make-up' shown us Gualtiero as a fair swashbuckler—a tawny brute, a Saxon-looking kind of magnifico. He might sit for the picture of the spark in the Laureate's Medley:

> 'A Prince I was, blue-eyed and fair of face,
> Of temper amorous as the first of May,
> With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a girl,
> For on my cradle shone the Northern star.'

The Northern star *must* have shone on the cradle of some one of Gualtiero's ancestors, at least. His behaviour is altogether that of a young Berseker, or a young Ostrogothic brigand, or a young Danish pirate, whose life is perpetually passed in knocking men on the head and making brutal love to women; who beats his mistresses when they displease him, and gets uncommonly drunk on metheglin about three times a week.

On the three characters of Griselda, Gualtiero, and Cosmo the burden of these four acts almost entirely rests. The subordinate characters, Paolo, the shepherd father of Griselda; Anna, his wife; Lelio, the griping old steward of the Marquis; and Anita, the Marchioness's *suivante*, are the merest pawns in the game. Miss Braddon might have added an underplot, such as may be found in the *Taming of the Shrew*; but the unity of the story and the deeply tender and pathetic character of the sentiment inculcated in every line might have been imperilled by the introduction of a weak or a cumbersome subsidiary intrigue. At the same time, although the interest rarely flags—how can it when the hero and heroine are nearly always on the stage?—and there is no lack of interesting 'situations,' some additional variety might have been imported into the play by the provision of a few more scenes and a few more characters. There may be a section of critics who think that Cosmo the villain ought to have been broken on the wheel by his cousin after the detection of his perfidy, or at least that he should have been stabbed

or strangled by one of the *bravi* in his employ. Poetic justice of the conventional order is, indeed, not vindicated in *Griselda* by the violent death of the wicked cousin, or even by the consignment of the 'Taraytor to the deepest dungeon beneath the castle moat;' but is it not better so, and has not Miss Braddon acted very sensibly in letting the villain alone? The Marquis of Steyne, in *Vanity Fair*, does not come to an immediately bad end. He lives for many years afterwards, like the Thane of Cawdor, a prosperous gentleman. 'I wud,' said the old Scotchwoman, when she had come to the end of *Paradise Lost*, 'they'd a finished up wi' th' auld deil.' Mr. John Milton was too good a judge finally to dispose of his Leading Character. He 'reserved him for more wrath.' We should not be in too great a hurry to make an end of people. My own theory is that Cosmo married the heiress of the Malatesta family, and subsequently obliged his cousin—who was himself of an extravagant temperament, and bound to fall into difficulties at last—with trifling advances of money at sixty per centum per annum.

When from the play I turn to the performers, I find in the acting of Mrs. Rousby a theme duly to expatiate on which would—had I scope and verge enough—require many pages of this Magazine. But in lieu of pages I can barely now afford to give as many lines. That Mrs. Rousby is a very beautiful, graceful, and accomplished lady is known—and has been known for a long time—to the whole play-going public both in London and in the provinces. We are all equally familiar with the facts that she has a voice of singular clearness, sweetness, and purity; that her elocution, in cadence, accentuation, and intonation, is very admirable; and that—which is rarely the case with tragic actresses now on the stage—she shows, as perfectly as Mrs. Charles Kean, as Miss Helen Faucit, and as Miss Glyn have shown, that she thoroughly understands, not only every word she is uttering, but the ultimate bent and gist of every speech she delivers,—that she is not only the mouthpiece of a poet's fine language, but the appreciative interpreter of a poet's finer thoughts and feelings. The only fault that, from a rhetorical point of view, I can find with her is that she sometimes begins to speak in too low a key, and that some moments elapse before her voice rises to playhouse pitch. It never fails so to rise eventually, and to maintain its legitimate *sostenuto*, from which easy and natural descents and ascents can be made; but as she reaches the golden mean of the *mezza voce*—the tone which can be heard from the front row of the stalls to the backmost row of the gallery—we sometimes lose a few words. For the correction of this trifling fault—a mere temporary slur in a performance of rarely equalled grace and vigour—she could not have a better monitor and exemplar than her husband, Mr. Rousby, who has triumphantly conquered all the difficulties presented by a voice normally neither dulcet nor flexible; and who has so disciplined

and subordinated it to every phase and condition of modulation as to render that which must once have been very refractory the most docile and tractable of organs. Similar was the triumph achieved towards the end of his noble and blameless career by the late Mr. Charles Kean; still his voice, even to the end, was marred by some incurable vices of *timbre*. From this defect Mr. Rousby's intonation is free. Technically, both Mr. and Mrs. Rousby have mastered the minutest details of a difficult and too-often-carelessly pursued vocation. Mrs. Rousby knows how to weep and how to laugh as well as Mrs. Clive or Mrs. Cibber could have known how to perform those difficult feats on the stage. She can faint away with infinite grace; she manages her train with dexterity as admirable; when she lets her back-hair down, the tresses never get into her eyes; she can kneel, sit, recline, and fall on the ground—all crucial tests, even to the most practised actresses—with irreproachable suppleness and adroitness; she can go mad without being absurd, and scream without splitting the ears of the groundlings; and (only, very fortunately, poor Patient Grissel is not conveyed in the last act to Brompton Cemetery) I have no doubt that Mrs. Rousby would be able to Die (theatrically) as majestically as Mrs. Siddons was wont to do.

It might be expected that I should say something about the very noble and eloquent language in which the drama of *Griselda* is couched—about the majestic cadence of the blank verse, the accuracy of the rhythm, and the plenitude of graceful and tender sentiments, replete with the truest essence of poetic feeling, interspersed through a lengthy and exquisitely polished performance. I resolutely decline to do anything of the kind, and I can plead as many reasons for my abstention as did that mayor of Boulogne who was threatened with a *præmunire* for neglecting to fire a salute in honour of Henry VIII. The mayor of Boulogne alleged twenty-seven reasons for his *laches*, the first being that he had no gunpowder. I will adduce but three. In the first place, all the people in London whose judgment is worth hearing have by this time seen *Griselda*, and are in a position to judge of the merit of the work for themselves. In the next place, the 'book' of the drama is not yet published; and were I to strive to repeat the most notable of the passages which caught my ear or stirred my heart, I might misquote them—an offence which poetesses never pardon. In the third and last place, Miss Braddon is a very old and valued friend of mine, whose progress from early womanhood in the career she has so valorously pursued I have watched with something akin to parental affection; and I should laugh at myself, and she would laugh at me, and the public would laugh at us both, if I put my pen to the shabby work of flattering an authoress in her own Magazine.

THE MAJOR'S LUNCHEON

AN OWER TRUE TALE

It was a bright sunny day in July, and although people seemed to find it hot, yet to me the atmosphere had only just the chill off, for I was lately home from a lengthened sojourn in Bombay. I had been to the India Office to see one of the officials on a little matter of detail connected with my furlough, and I had two or three hours to spare before my train—I live at Sevenoaks, and had a return ticket by the London, Chatham, and Dover—was due to start, and I didn't exactly know how to employ the time. I strolled across the Parade, ascended the steps by the Duke of York's Column, stood and stared at the statue they have just put up of Outram; horse standing on three legs, and Outram looking back, leaning on the flank of his horse. Well, I hadn't much fault to find with the statue, except, perhaps, as to the horse being a little heavy, and that I'd have made him splashing out with his near fore leg, seeing that his rider's leaning over the off flank; but, notwithstanding, it's a spirited thing, and that's a good deal to say in these days. When I'd had a good look at Outram I turned into Pall-mall, and took a long stare at the print-shops, and then I sauntered along the Opera colonnade, a fragrant whiff of some cooking going on at the restaurant there making me all of a sudden feel as if I was hungry.

Perhaps you will say that I was in the right quarter to be satisfied; but I didn't feel so. I am, like John Gilpin, of a frugal mind. I haven't toiled all these years in a foreign land under a blazing sun to dissipate my modest hoard on cooks and restaurateurs; moreover, my appetite is a masculine one, and is not to be appeased by cutlets as big as half-crowns. Should I take the 'bus' to Paddington, and lunch with my sister Emily? Paddington is a long way, Emily as likely as not would be out, and if at home she would probably be lunching off cream-cheese and Osborne biscuits, and a glass of Gladstonian claret. Should I retreat to my station, and refresh myself calmly at the dining-room there and await my train? There was something ignominious in the idea. Here was I in one of the most wonderful cities in the world, and all I could find it in my heart to do was to get out of it as quickly as possible.

Irresolute I stood at the corner of the Haymarket, not having made up my mind which way to go. I hadn't stood there a second before an old Irishwoman asked me the way to Bethnal-green. I was rather flurried at this, as, although I have a good general idea of the

direction of Bethnal-green, I found it difficult to methodise it with sufficient rapidity for the old Irishwoman, who gave me a glance of contempt and passed on. Before I had recovered from this, two very nice-looking girls, moved, I suppose, by my fatherly appearance, besought me, with charming smiles, to direct them to the Academy. Now in my young days the Academy used to be at the National Gallery, and although I ought to have known very well that it was now at Burlington House, yet I had somehow never realised the fact, and so I sent off these two very nice young creatures entirely in the wrong direction. My heart smote me the next moment, and I was about to rush across the street to stop them and put them in the right way when I was seized by a florid young Irishman, with all the superfluous energy and fluency of his country, who insisted on my directing him to the Chief Commissioner of the Civil Service, and was very angry with me when I assured him that there was no such functionary. He insisted in producing an official envelope addressed to Michael O'Donovan, Esq., at some howling wilderness in Tipperary, which certainly bore in the corner the words, 'Civil-Service Commissions.'

'And would there be a Commission widout a Commissioner?' cried Michael triumphantly, but scornfully; and then I saw what he wanted of course, and sent him off to Dean's-yard; but I didn't know, after all, whether he wouldn't have committed an assault upon me with the idea he'd got that I was 'desaving' him. I hope to goodness the Civil-Service Commission hasn't moved too, or I shall fear to find my tall Irish friend waiting for me at the corner of the Haymarket with a big stick next time I pass.

But next minute I was paid for all, when such a sweet voice fell upon my ear, and a lady with a little boy in her hand asked me the way to Regent-street. She had one of those softly-moulded sympathetic faces that give one a heart-ache when one finds that the owners of them are married, not with any idea of selfish appropriation, but with the thought that such sweet candid creatures should be set apart for the love and adoration of all mankind, and not monopolised by some one unworthy wretch. She asked me the way to Regent-street, and happy was I that I knew it. After that I deserted my post and darted across to the other side.

I hadn't got more than half-a-dozen yards when I felt a hand laid upon my arm, and saw at my side a very good-looking, well-dressed man.

'My dear fellow,' he said, 'how are you?'

I didn't know but what I knew the man, for one meets so many people of his kidney; and, for aught I could tell, I might have been hospitably entertained by him somewhere or other up the country, so that I didn't like to confess my ignorance of his name and quality. And we walked very cordially together towards St. Martin's Church.

'When was the last time we met?' said my new friend. 'Surely at the Governor-General's ball at Calcutta.'

'Never was at Calcutta in my life,' I said; 'mine's the Bombay Presidency.'

'And I've been taking you all this time for Colonel Scoop. Is it possible that I'm deceived?'

I always feel, with the least degree of soreness when in England, that my friends in the military branch have somewhat the pull over us civilians in matter of titles; but in India 'collector' is a very much more important title than colonel, but people don't seem to understand that, and set us on a level with the tax-gatherer. Thus it was with a slight degree of acerbity I replied, that I was no colonel at all, but a mere civil servant.

'Most wonderful!' cried my friend. 'Never was such an extraordinary resemblance. Pardon the unconscious liberty I've taken.'

Well, we were very polite to one another, and asked after this man and the other, whom, perhaps, we might both know, and got quite thick together. Major Bilkins, it appeared, was the man's name; he was a nice, agreeable fellow, and we walked on together in a very amicable way. Bilkins hoped I'd come and look him up at his little place in Surrey, and I gave him my card and said I'd be glad to see him at Sevenoaks.

'And what are you going to do now?' said the Major. 'Come and lunch with me at the Oriental.'

Now, there are six or seven men to whom I've a deadly hatred who lunch at the Oriental daily, besides which one gets quite enough of the Orient in India, and so I told him.

'Quite right,' he said; '*I* like to get out of the regular groove. What do you say to going into the City and having a bit of fish together? I know a capital place, Chuffin's, close to Billingsgate, and handy for our trains. Take the penny boat from Hungerford, eh?'

I willingly agreed to this, for I like to make the acquaintance of new phases of life under competent guidance, although I haven't enterprise enough to cut out anything of the kind for myself.

The tide was well up, and we had a pleasant sail down the river. There is no more charming vista than that from Hungerford-bridge. The Embankment makes a handsome sweep just there, and the bridge of Waterloo, surely the handsomest bridge in England, and Somerset House, and St. Paul's looming over all; but lower down the Embankment gives a sadly tame and formal aspect to the river. A stone wall, accentuated with lamp-posts and door-knockers, is an unworthy monument of British taste. You might have taken a hint from the Hindoo ghauts, or landing-places, to advantage.

We landed close to London-bridge, and the Major introduced me to Chuffin's. A very nice place, with an ordinary and a regular

chairman, and characters that, if I were one of your pen-and-ink artists, I should have great pleasure in sketching for you. We had no end of fish of the very best. But the Major seduced me into extravagance. A pint of champagne with our fish, some brown sherry, and, to wind up, some capital iced punch, an iniquitous sort of proceeding for a man who had a family dinner awaiting him at seven; but I got into the spirit of the thing somehow, and the Major's conversation was really quite bright and enthralling.

'I must leave you now,' said the Major, calling the waiter and picking out a ninepenny cigar. He took a handful of change out of his pocket. 'You'll allow me to settle for this little affair?'

'Couldn't think of it,' I said warmly; 'not on any account.'

'O, nonsense! Well, I won't press it,' he said, seeing I was determined. 'Let's see, two-and-six, five, seven-and-six, and six for the waiter, eight shillings a-piece; shall I settle?'

'Do, if you please,' I said, handing my friend half a sovereign.

The Major gave me a two-shilling piece and lounged away to the little desk where they took the money, made his financial arrangements, and vanished with a parting wave of the hand.

For myself I confess that I felt a little muddled with the good things of which I had partaken. I ordered a brandy-and-soda and screw of tobacco, and indulged in a long clay pipe—a thing I very much affect when I have a chance.

Presently, as the time for my train approached, I knocked out the ashes of my pipe and made my way to the door.

'I have to pay for a brandy-and-soda and tobacco,' I said.

'Yes, sir,' said the waiter, who hovered about to check off the payers, 'and two dinners, champagne, sherry, punch—eighteen shillings, if you please, sir.'

'But,' I remonstrated, 'my friend paid for all that.'

'I beg your pardon, sir,' said the young woman at the desk; 'he left word, sir, that you would settle for everythink.'

Well, they wouldn't let me go without paying, and I went home rather crestfallen. I wrote to Major Bilkins, at Blickley Park, Surrey, but my letter came back in due course marked in red and other coloured inks all over it, 'Not known; try ——' ever so many places.

O, Major Bilkins, I didn't mind so much paying for your feed and giving you a little pocket-money, but it was rather too bad to hand me for change out of my half-sovereign a florin that proved to be a 'duffer.'

T.

BELGRAVIA

JANUARY 1874

LOST FOR LOVE

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

'I am touch'd again with shades of early sadness,
Like the summer cloud's light shadow in my hair;
I am thrill'd again with breaths of boyish gladness,
Like the scent of some last primrose on the air.

But my being is confused with new experience,
And changed to something other than it was;
And the Future with the Past is set at variance,
And Life falters 'neath the burdens which it has.'

AFTER that quiet dinner in Fitzroy-square, at which he made the acquaintance of Mr. Leyburne, Dr. Ollivant dropped in now and then, in a familiar way, to see his old friend—indeed, in his brief and infrequent intervals of leisure, and even at times when, but for this new distraction, he would have given his hours to study, the doctor found himself drawn, as it were, involuntarily towards Mr. Chamney's house. Mrs. Ollivant perceived that the precious after-dinner hour in which she had enjoyed her son's society was now apt to be clipped and curtailed, for no stronger reason than that he had promised to go round to Chamney's. His mother felt this spoliation of her one bright hour. That after-dinner tête-à-tête by the drawing-room fire had been her daily sum of happiness. No matter even if he were sometimes silent and meditative, gazing into the fire, absorbed by thoughts unshared with her. It was all the world to have him—to be able to watch the thoughtful face, and say to herself, 'This great man is my son.' Now she was being gradually shorn of her privilege; the after-dinner hour was shrunken to half an hour, for, on the evenings on which he did not go out, he was anxious to get to his books a little earlier than of old, in order to make up, in some wise, for the evenings he gave to friendship.

'I should hardly have thought Mr. Chamney's society would have proved so attractive to you, Cuthbert,' Mrs. Ollivant said one evening, when the doctor excused himself from going up-stairs to the drawing-room at all, in order to go straight from the dinner-table to Fitzroy-square. 'He appears to me a warm-hearted excellent man, but by no means intellectual, and I should have supposed him a dull companion for a mind like yours.'

A dusky red glowed for a minute or so in the doctor's dark cheek as he lingered on the hearth, ostensibly to warm himself, really because he felt a little ashamed of his unfilial eagerness to be gone.

'I don't go to him exactly for companionship,' he said, looking at the fire with that thoughtful downward glance of his, as of a man who lives within himself, and is always looking inwards rather than outwards; whose eyes, except for the mere mechanical purposes of existence, are of no particular use to him. 'I go because Chamney likes to see me. He is a poor creature, without a friend in England, and would feel—what is that Scotch proverb?—like a cow in a *fremd loaning* if it were not for me.'

'He has his daughter's company, and that young man to whom he has taken such a fancy.'

'The young man can only talk about pictures and sing duets with Flora; not much amusement for Chamney. Besides, my visits are in some part professional.'

'Is he so very ill?'

Dr. Ollivant shrugged his shoulders.

'He is very far from well, and there is no hope of his ever being better. The end may come at any moment. I want to stave it off as long as I can.'

'I can't blame you for wishing to do that, Cuthbert; and I won't grumble any more even if your anxiety about Mr. Chamney robs me of your society very often. Perhaps I was just a little inclined to be jealous, for I thought it might be the young lady who was the attraction. She's a sweet girl, and I'm very fond of her, as you know; but I should like to see you look higher than that if ever you marry.'

'Higher? How much higher?' he thought wonderingly. For something better than youth, and freshness, and innocence, and a modest loveliness that was better than all the splendour of form and colour that ever went by the name of beauty?

'I am not at all likely to marry, my dear mother,' he answered quietly; 'and Flora would as soon think of marrying the chemist who makes up my prescriptions as me. In her eyes I am a superannuated bachelor. Good-night, mother. Pray don't sit up for me. I shall go to my room and read when I come in.'

Thus, between friendship and science, Dr. Ollivant fell something below his former excellence as a son.

It would have been difficult for any one familiar with his pre-

ous way of life to discover what was the attraction that drew him to tavoy-square. He was not particularly fond of music or of painting; t music and painting formed the staple of the talk when Walter yburne happened to be spending his evening with the Chamneys, d the doctor rarely found him absent. He listened with sublime tience to Mozart and Rossini, Verdi and Donizetti, hardly know- one master's work from the other all the while. He watched two figures at the piano just as he had done that first night. assisted at the exhibition of Flora's drawings—she was now rking systematically under Mr. Leyburne's tuition—and pro- nced upon the correct drawing of an arm, or the accurate fore- rtening of a foot, and demonstrated to the docile pupil how foot arm diverged from the laws of anatomy. Dull work enough, it ght have been supposed, for a man to whom the best society to be ained among professional classes would have been open, had he ed to cultivate society.

It had become a natural thing for him to drop in twice or three ces a week, and Flora had grown delightfully familiar with him, had never put off that somewhat reverential feeling with which oman of romantic temperament regards a man who is at once r superior in age and intellect. Let him come as often as he ased, her manner always implied that his visit was a condescen- n. Let his conversation be of the dryest subjects within the ge of his knowledge, she betrayed no touch of weariness. He ceived this, and was charmed by it, yet knew only too well that r heart had its attraction elsewhere; that a certain light quick p upon the stair sent the warm blood to her happy face; the dden opening of a door and announcement of one familiar name ightened all her being like a burst of sunshine over a flower- rden. He saw all this, and watched it, and at times taught him- lf to believe that it interested him only as an amusing study of aracter; that he could look down from the altitude of his maturer ars upon these butterfly loves, and, if unable to sympathise with so ght a love, could at least feel kindly towards the lovers.

Was it not, he asked himself repeatedly, the best thing that uld happen in his interest? Let Mark Chamney give his daughter this foolish young painter before he died, and, lo, all responsi- lity would be shifted from his shoulders. He might act as her ustee still, perhaps; take care of her fortune; and see that this reless fellow did not, after squandering his own worldly goods, spoil her of hers. But of herself, of this fair young flower which its delicate bloom seemed like a bud that had blossomed only wither, he need take no care. Of a charge so uncongenial to his ture and his habits he would be relieved. Yes, it would be to his vantage unquestionably that this love story, just begun, should me to a happy ending.

Yet it was worth while to glance for a moment at the other side of the picture. If poor dear Chamney, on whom the hand of doom was too palpable, should die without expressing any wish about his daughter's marriage—die before the boy-and-girl fancy had grown into a life-long love—die before Flora's heart was altogether given to this shallow lover—what then? She would be his ward. His the precious charge of her present and her future. His to advise, to dictate to even, were she inclined to any act of girlish folly that might imperil her happiness. She would enter his house as an adopted daughter. He could picture to himself how her presence would brighten that dull home; could fancy himself finding a new pleasure in home life. The fair young face smiling at him across his dinner-table. The sweet voice singing in the quiet evenings. He had no need to be a lover of music in order to love her singing. If she had spun, the sound of her spinning-wheel would have been melody to him. He thought how he might improve her education, which was of the common boarding-school type, and enlarge her mind. How his own old love of poetry, put aside on the very threshold of his scientific education—the younger and more romantic tastes and fancies of his boyhood—might revive in this Indian summer of his life.

Not all at once did these fancies become interwoven with the very tissue of his mind, until to look at Flora's gentle face was to speculate upon the position he was to occupy towards her in that unknown future—whether she was to be his ward or Walter Leyburne's wife! Gradually and imperceptibly this new and strange influence entered into his life, changed the whole current of his thoughts, and, but for his natural strength of will, must needs have distracted him from the chief purpose of his existence—that calm and patient pursuit of science which was to lead him on to greatness. Happily he had mental force enough to supply two lives—that inner life in which a girl's image made the focus and centre of every thought, and the outer and active life in which he marched breast to breast with the deepest thinkers of his profession.

The dull winter days went by, slowly the fog-curtains rolled away from the house-tops, and London, which had been a kind of cloudland, where cabs and omnibuses loomed ghostlike athwart the gloom, stood forth clearly outlined in the bitter east wind. This the cheerful citizens called spring, and congratulated one another upon the lengthening of days; in which every street-corner teemed with the primal elements of rheumatism and tic douloureux.

Thus heralded came April, and found the Fitzroy-square household unchanged in its quiet mode of life, and waiting for warmer weather before essaying even so mild a change as a journey to some sea-coast or inland watering-place. Mark Chamney had, to the doctor's keen eye, altered for the worse during these months. He

was less equal even to the small exertions of his daily life, suffered more from languor and depression, took a more gloomy view of his own case, and was more oppressed by vague anxieties about his daughter's future. But from his daughter herself he studiously concealed his condition, pretended in her presence to look hopefully at life, and in his unselfish soul was glad to find there was another object now to divide with him her care and thought, another footstep for her quick ear to mark, another voice to bring the startled happy look he knew so well into her face. Pure and serene affection of a father which can thus calmly endure division! That very look was keenest anguish to Dr. Ollivant.

For nearly five months the painter had been a constant visitor in Mr. Chamney's house, and in all that time neither Mr. Chamney nor the doctor had been able to discover any harm in him, though the doctor's eye had been keen to mark any sign of stumbling. If he were indeed, as the doctor affirmed, shallow and conceited, his shallowness was sparkling as the surface of a rivulet, his conceit the most inoffensive self-satisfaction that ever placed a man on easy terms with his fellow men. He was indeed a young man upon whom even small vices sat pleasantly. Carelessness, procrastination, frivolity, seemed interwoven with the charm of his vivacious manner. His carelessness was a kind of unselfishness, his procrastination a deferring of disagreeable necessities, his frivolity the natural outcome of a light heart. Mark Chamney, no habitual student of character, had taken some pains to study the painter's disposition, and after five months' intimacy had arrived at the opinion that it was a nature without a flaw.

'If he were my own son I could hardly think better of him,' he said to the doctor one evening when the usual Mozart and Rossini business was going on at the piano.

'People do not always think highly of their own sons,' answered Cuthbert, with his cynical air; 'you don't commit yourself to much in saying that.'

'Why do you always sneer when I talk about him?' asked the father fretfully. 'It's rather hard upon me, Ollivant, when you know what I've set my heart upon. Have you anything to allege against him?'

'Nothing. He is very well, as young men go, I have no doubt; only I have seen so little of the species that I am hardly in a position to pronounce on the individual. If you put the thing home to me as a personal matter, I don't like young men; but as youth is an obnoxious phase through which humanity must pass, one is bound to be tolerant towards it. In a woman now, I confess, youth is enchanting; like a rosebud when its petals are just opening, or a river a little way from its source. But a young man is like a young tree; an awkward slip of a sapling, in which it is hard to discover the

promise of the oak. And as to what you have set your heart upon, as you say, now don't you think it might be wiser to let events shape their own course?'

'Wiser, perhaps,' answered the other gloomily, 'for a father who had half a lifetime before him. I can't afford to let things take their course. I want to see my little girl's future settled, before—'

He did not finish a sentence which for his medical adviser needed no ending.

'When you came to me that November night, Chamney, and we had our first confidential talk, you said nothing of a husband; you seemed content to leave your daughter to my care. Have I done anything to show myself unworthy of the trust?'

'You, my dear Ollivant!' exclaimed Mark hurriedly. 'For God's sake don't think me ungrateful! I am content to trust her to you; yes, with all my heart, as secure that you would do your duty to her as that I would do a father's duty myself. There has never been anything to weaken that first idea in my mind. When I saw your name in the newspapers, and thought over our schoolboy friendship, the notion that came into my head about you seemed like an inspiration; only when I came across this young man, and brought him here, and he and Baby seemed to take to each other—she so fond of painting, their voices harmonising, and so forth—another notion flashed across my brain, like another inspiration. You could still be her trustee, my representative when I am gone; but if I could provide her with a husband—a husband of her own choice, mind you, not mine—the idea would be in a manner completed.'

'I daresay you are right,' Dr. Ollivant answered rather listlessly, as if the discussion had outlasted his interest in the subject. 'The only question, therefore, that remains is whether the young man is eligible.'

They said no more that evening. Mr. Leyburne and Flora left the piano very soon after this, and came to join their elders in the back drawing-room, whereby the conversation became general. Walter favoured them with a description of the works of various 'ineptitudes' whose pictures had been admitted to the walls of the Royal Academy, tossed over the books upon Flora's table, and talked a little of literature, in the usual young-man style; pronouncing judgment upon hoary-headed sages, and patronising veterans with ineffable superiority. Dr. Ollivant, who was apt to grow silent when the painter talked, looked and listened, and anon departed, after his usual calm good-night.

'I lose all your nice conversation when I am singing,' Flora said with a regretful look, as she shook hands with him at parting; 'but you see, we are obliged to keep up our duets. It would be such a pity to get out of practice when we have once learned them together

But I do like to hear you talk, Dr. Ollivant, and I enjoy your visits most when we are quite alone.'

'If you could be always quite alone,' said the doctor.

'O, you know very well, I don't mean that. Mr. Leyburne is so nice, and has given me such help with my drawing; I can never be grateful enough for that. He has let me go into sepia at last; such a relief after that dirty chalk! Please come to see us very soon again. Good-night!'

So lightly dismissed! Rewarded for all his wasted hours—the leisure which to him was the fine gold of life—with a touch of girlish patronage; told that his grave talk was not altogether unamusing, in the absence of better entertainment. He walked homeward in the clear April night, the housetops beautified by the star-shine, but, when near the long dull street in which he lived, went off at a tangent in the direction of Regent's-park. He was in no humour for the tranquil silence of his library—for the study that until so lately had made the brightest side of his life. He felt as if the close dark house with its narrow walls would be intolerable to him. He wanted to think out something in the free air of heaven, to walk down the evil spirit within him; that evil fatal spirit which tempted him to brood upon Flora's fair young face with a fond foolish passion, senile almost as it seemed to him, who at eight-and-thirty had lived a longer life than the common herd of men—longer in labour and science, perhaps, but in passion until now a blank.

Chapter VIII.

'O father, what a hell of witchcraft lies
In the small orb of one particular tear!
But with the inundation of the eyes,
What rocky heart to water will not wear?
What breast so cold that is not warmèd here?'

The Lamia picture had made due progress during the winter and spring, and, as it is almost impossible to paint a young woman's portrait without arriving at some degree of intimacy with the woman herself, Louisa Gurner and Walter Leyburne had by this time—while spring was still young and bleak and cold—become something more than common acquaintance.

Walter had worked harder than usual at this picture, and had been more constant to his first idea than he was wont to be. It was the first meeting of Lycius and Lamia, 'about a bird's flutter from the wood' near Corinth, that he had ultimately chosen for his subject—a dreamy landscape dimly shown in the mystic twilight, and only those two figures, youth and passion incarnate.

During the first few sittings he had found his model curiously silent and shy, and had even begun to think she must be, as her father had hinted, a dull and stupid young person at best. She had

been obedient and submissive to his orders; had stood patiently in the attitude in which he placed her; had never yawned, or shifted from one foot to the other, throwing every line of the figure wrong in an instant, as hireling models were apt to do. But for some time his little attempts at conversation, prompted by civility or even kindness, had been futile. He could obtain nothing more than monosyllabic replies or the most commonplace little remarks, which sounded like a mere echo of Mrs. Gurner.

Yet he could hardly bring himself to believe her utterly stupid. Those great dark eyes, which he strove to reproduce upon his canvas, had at times such a look of depth, as though unfathomable wells of thought and feeling lay beneath their shining surface; those lips had grave and pathetic curves, which he would have chosen for his type of passion and sorrow from all the lips in creation. Yes, there must be a soul lurking in this neglected form—a soul of wider capabilities than common souls—a mind that lacked only the light of education. He had not spent three mornings at his new picture before a new idea flashed into his busy brain. What a glorious thing it would be to illumine the outer darkness in which this poor child lived—to redeem this imprisoned soul from its bondage—or, in plain words, to educate Jarred Gurner's daughter!

If the picture were to be a success, now, it would be a generous and appropriate act to make the girl some worthy recompense for her trouble. He would owe half his fame to her peculiar beauty. He might never have thought of his subject had not her face put the Lamia fancy into his head. What recompense could be better for her than three or four years in a good school? She had talked despairingly of Voysey-street as a world from which she saw no avenue of escape. To place her in some pleasant suburban seminary—such an establishment as that of Miss Mayduke's, of whom Flora was so fond of talking—would be to rescue her at once from her sordid surroundings, to lift her out of the kennel in which she had grovelled so long. And afterwards, when her education and his patronage ended together? Why, then her future would be in a manner in her own hands. A woman with a good education may do so many things. She may turn governess or companion—there is of course a perennial demand for either article—or she may go in for book-keeping, and earn a handsome living in some commercial establishment.

'Yes,' said the painter to himself, as decisively as if he had sworn to do this thing, 'if the Lamia is a success, I will give Loo three years at a good boarding-school.'

It was a mere fancy of his to make the benefit contingent on the future of his picture, since he could have very well afforded to do this good work. A young man of simple habits and an income of three thousand a year has ample margin for benevolence; but an

unsuccessful man is apt to feel churlishly disposed towards his fellow creatures, and Walter Leyburne felt that if the picture were a failure, his model's welfare would be a matter of small importance to him.

In the mean time, however, he found some amusement in educating the young lady himself, not according to any system or educational process known to trained instructors, but in that desultory and fragmentary mode in which the teacher follows the bent of his own mind, and seeks first of all his own amusement.

After three or four sittings Loo had brightened wonderfully; the shy restrained manner wore off. She ceased to torment herself with an angry feeling that this spoiled child of fortune must needs despise herself and all her surroundings; that he was only civil to her out of a scornful pity; that he deemed her of a different clay from that young lady of whom he had spoken with such loving admiration. He was so thoroughly kind that her rebellious heart could not long hold out against him. Her face lighted up at sight of him. Those days in which he spent all the lightest hours in her father's room—they two alone together for the most part—became intervals of happiness. It was quite a new feeling to her. Her only idea of pleasure until now had been to sit on the fender while her father worked or smoked, in those rare intervals of indulgence when this privilege was permitted to her; but even these glimpses of sunshine were apt to end in storm and darkness. Something would go wrong about the supper, or he would receive an unpleasant letter, or a call from some one to whom he owed money, and in any case would vent his ill-temper upon her. Walter Leyburne was kinder than her father at his kindest, and was never ill-tempered.

Little by little she contrived to make some slight amendment in her appearance. Her hair was better brushed, and neatly arranged in that classic style which the painter had taught her; the old green stuff gown was more carefully mended. She had an object in life, and grudged no labour to make herself decent. She had tried to extort a gown from her grandmother's generosity, a gown out of the stock; but the old lady was adamant.

'If I once allowed the stock to be tampered with, I should never know where I was,' she said. 'The business would go to pieces in no time. I must have a good show of variety—something to catch every eye. There's that plum-coloured satin, for instance; it's very slow to sell, but I've had a good bit of money out of that gown from first to last. Young women come in and look at it, and make a bargain about it, and agree to buy it by weekly instalments, and leave a deposit of half-a-crown or eighteenpence, and never come nigh the place again. Change their minds, I suppose, or find it's beyond their means. One middle-aged lady, in the public line, paid me six instalments as regular as clockwork, and after that never

come anigh me. Such is the fickleness of human nature. No, Louisa, I will never consent to tamper with the stock. If you won't do for Laminia in your green merino, which must have cost seven-and-sixpence a yard when it was new—'

'I daresay it did, grandma; for that must have been when merinoes were first invented.'

'He can go elsewhere and paint some other young woman, and pay her for her trouble, which he doesn't you,' continued Mrs. Gurner, without noticing the pert interruption.

'If he doesn't pay me, grandma, he pays father plenty of money.'

'That's as may be. *I* don't often see the colour of it. There's half a dozen rates on the chimneypiece; and if we've water for our tea this very afternoon, it's more than I expect; for the collector threatened to cut it off three weeks ago.'

Though the sittings took place in Mr. Gurner's room, that gentleman was rarely present. He had made it a point that the thing should be done under his own roof—that his daughter in her dealings with this stranger should be, as it were, guarded by the ægis of his parental character, surrounded with the sacred influences of the domestic hearth; and having secured this point, he appeared somewhat indifferent to details. He was by nature an idler and a loafer, and so long as the sting of the foul serpent, poverty, pierced not too keenly, he would take his ease—preferring to roam the world at random in pursuit of stray gleams of good luck, than to toil at home at the slow drudgery of his art. Thus it happened that the painter and his model had the shabby first-floor front for the most part to themselves, and Walter had ample leisure for that educational process to which his fancy inclined. Mrs. Gurner, always a stickler for the observance of social laws as understood in the unwritten code of Voysey-street, did occasionally interrupt the sitting by a stately visit, begging to be allowed to see the picture, and favouring the painter with her ideas upon his particular work, and art in general.

'Give me the old masters, Mr. Leyburne,' she would remark in conclusion, 'without meaning any disrespect to you; for I make no doubt when Laminia comes out a little clearer the picture will be very taking. But don't tell me about your Millisses, and your Belmores, and your 'Olman 'Unts. Give me the old masters. Look at the tone and the mellowness of 'em, everything subdued down into a beautiful rich brown, and as smooth as a mahogany table. Why if you put your nose against one of them Millisses it's as rough as a gravel path, all the paint laid on in splotches and ridges, as if it had been painted with a curry-comb. Give me a Rembren, or a Vandilk; there's as fine a tone in one of their Holy Families as in a Stradivarius violin.'

To such art-criticism as this Mr. Leyburne could only defer in all humility.

'I have unbounded respect for the old masters,' he said; 'Rubens and Vandyke were giants. Yes, Mrs. Gurner, the old masters were fine fellows. Even Sir Joshua was knocked backwards by them. He saw something in the Italian school that modern art—even his—could never compass.'

Mrs. Gurner's visit generally ended in a luncheon, respectfully suggested and paid for by the painter. He would run across to the fish-shop and order a liberal supply of oysters, adding thereto a handsome allowance of Edinburgh ale from the handiest public-house; and in ten minutes or so Jarred's table would be cleared of its litter of papers and glue-pots and brushes and files and gimlets, and a gipsy kind of repast spread thereon. Loo, with that new-born instinct of hers tending towards order, contrived that there should always be a clean tablecloth ready on these occasions, even though she had to wash it in a handbasin at midnight after her father's supper.

Mr. Leyburne derived a curious kind of enjoyment from these gipsy meals—a pleasure keener than, if not so pure as, that which he felt in the Fitzroy-square dinners. Outspoken as he might be in Miss Chamney's presence, having at no time any evil thought to conceal, any cloven foot to cover with the drapery of polite language, his soul expanded yet more fully here, and Self, that agreeable creature, stood boldly forth in its brightest colours. He knew that he was admired, that Louisa believed in him as an Indian believes in his fetish. Little words, little looks, unconscious of their own force and meaning, had revealed as much as this, and the young man enjoyed the sunshine, without after-thought for himself or any one. He had never in his life had an after-thought. He was, indeed, serene in the consciousness of benevolent intentions towards this poor foolish child; that idea of the boarding-school shut the door upon every anxious thought. Let her worship him a little, if she liked, in the present; the worship had already lent a new refinement to her manner, a spirituality to her strangely handsome face. She was being educated in the best possible school for a woman's progress—a school in which sentiment and sympathy eked out the words of the teacher.

Even Mrs. Gurner's presence at these gipsy banquets took nothing from their pleasantness. She was not perhaps the companion whom one would have selected for a tête-à-tête repast; but as a third the painter found her an agreeable study of character. She made odd remarks of the Malaprop order—warmed a little with the influence of bottled ale, and cast off that heavy burden of misery which she was wont to carry through life. She philosophised upon life—as a maze whereof the devious turnings, and windings, and unexpected no-thoroughfares had sorely perplexed her spirit. She discoursed of her own past—those natural hopes and expectations of

a well-brought-up young woman which after-experience had disappointed. But of that bygone period she spoke always vaguely; and the status she had originally held, and the causes of her downfall, were alike unrevealed to the painter. Even in the most confidential moments, made garrulous with ale and oysters, she never descended from the cloudland of generalities to the solid ground of particulars.

'Life is an enigma, Mr. Leyburne,' she remarked one day, with a faint moan.

'Life, madam,' replied the painter, who always affected a certain ceremoniousness in his converse with the lady,—'life has been compared to a froward child, which must be rocked in its cradle, or narcotised with Daffy's Elixir till it falls asleep; a comparison, oddly enough, to be found verbatim in the works of three distinguished writers—Sir William Temple, Voltaire, and Goldsmith.'

'Ah,' said the matron sententiously, 'there are some children that don't get Daffy's Elixir. It's all vaccination, and measles, and rhubarb-powders for some of us.'

'There, grandma,' exclaimed Loo, with a shrug of her slim shoulders, 'don't be dreary; Mr. Leyburne doesn't come here for dreariness.'

'It's all very well at your age, Louisa,' answered Mrs. Gurner, with chilling dignity; 'but when you come to my time of life—'

'Which I'm sure I hope I never shall, grandma, if I'm to come to it in Voysey-street.'

'You would have fallen a good deal lower in the world but for me, Louisa. The lady's-wardrobe business was my idea. Jarred wouldn't have cared if we'd sunk to chandlery and Neville's bread.'

'I should have liked the chandlery better, for my part,' replied the incorrigible damsel. 'The trade would have been brisk, at any rate. I'd rather sell tea, and sugar, and candles, and Neville's bread, and spiced beef, any day than dawdle over old gowns and moth-eaten furs that nobody ever seems to want to buy. Yes, even if I had to serve all the small children in the neighbourhood with ha'porths of sugar-candy.'

Mrs. Gurner shook her head with the shake of calm despair.

'To think that such low instincts should crop up in a child of mine,' she said, 'after the trouble I took to fix upon a genteel business—no counter, no scales and weights, nothing humbling to the feelings.'

'No; and no till and no profits, mostly!' answered Loo.

Those gipsy banquets, however, delightful as they might be, were not quite the sweetest hours of Loo's new life. It was when the painter and she were alone together that she knew perfect happiness—a rapture of content so strange in its utter novelty. His talk was no longer mere civility, or frivolous commonplace, intended to

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LOO MAKES ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE POETS.

set her at her ease with him. He talked to her now as if she were on an intellectual level with himself; opened his heart and mind; told his hopes, and dreams, and fears; the story of his past; the scheme of his future; all his wildest fancies, which shifted like the figures in a kaleidoscope, but with far more variety of form and colour, and which never repeated themselves. He would talk to her as he had never ventured to talk to Flora—with a certain Bohemian recklessness, but no shadow of evil thought. He was, in fact, not particularly anxious to retain her good opinion, as he was with regard to Flora, and he let her see odd corners in his mind, which, despite his habitual candour, he had kept hidden from the young lady in Fitzroy-square. Flora was to be his wife some day; he looked upon that as a settled question, and she had therefore something of a sacred character in his mind. Not to her could he pour out his mind in all its fulness, as he could to this quick-witted young woman in Voysey-street; who, by reason of her early-acquired knowledge of life's darker side, seemed to be ten years older than Mark Chamney's daughter.

When he fancied that she was tired of standing, though he could never extort a complaint from her, or even an admission of weariness, he would suspend his work for a little while, being perhaps somewhat tired himself, and read to her. He took some pride in his reading, and read well, in a passionate impetuous way. This began by his reading Lamia, so that she might understand the story of which she was the heroine. The vivid passionate verse, so new to her unaccustomed ears, seemed like enchantment. Her own reading had lain chiefly in the direction of penny numbers—pirates, and bandit chiefs, and gipsy maidens, and *tout le tremblement*. This first glimpse of real poetry—all glow, and grace, and beauty—moved her curiously. It was then that all semblance of stupidity disappeared, and Walter Leyburne discovered that his surmise had been correct. Those broad temples were the indication of a powerful mind; a mind hid in darkness, but with infinite capacity. He had that happy thought about the boarding-school at once, and determined to educate her, for her profit and his own amusement meanwhile. He read her the whole of Keats; and then, finding her delight unabated, her hunger for eloquent verse only whetted, he opened the vast treasure-house of Shakespeare. He began with *Romeo and Juliet*, which entranced her. *Hamlet* she thought dull; the *Midsummer-Night's Dream* silly, except the scenes between Hermia and Helena. She warmed to *Othello*, and wept at the overthrow of that heroic soul. *Macbeth* was like a vision of a strange world, a region of passions grander than she had ever dreamed of, and she followed every line of those vivid pictures with intensest appreciation. No young woman who had been spoon-fed with 'Gems of Shakespeare' at school could have warmed to that mighty voice as she did, to whom the whole was new. It seemed to her as if she had only just begun to

live; or had emerged from some dark antechamber of the earth into fairyland. What did Voysey-street matter to her now? One street was as good as another to live in if she could have such a book as that to read, and such a friend as Mr. Leyburne to guide her in this new world of light, and life, and poetry.

He let her revel in Shakespeare till she knew all the great tragedies, and then called up another and younger spirit.

'Shakespeare is too heavy for my humour this morning,' he said one day, and produced a neat little morocco-bound volume from his pocket, which he opened thoughtfully, and anon took two or three turns up and down the room before he began to read.

He read, or in part recited, the whole of the *Giaour*, without pausing for a word of criticism. It was his masterpiece in the way of recitation; and he put his heart into every line. When he stood motionless, with downward-bending eyes, and began those thrilling lines:

'He who hath bent him o'er the dead,'

the girl's rapture broke forth in a passionate sob, but was as suddenly stifled, and she listened calmly to the end.

'That isn't Shakespeare,' she said.

'No.'

'Nor Keats.'

'No. I'm glad you begin to discriminate the differences of style.'

'I didn't think that human beings could write like that,' said the girl with a gasp. 'Where is he—the man that wrote about Leila?'

'Why?'

'Because I should like to go to him, and kneel down before him, and ask lief to worship him.'

'Rather a foolish proceeding, if he were alive,' answered Mr. Leyburne; 'but you may go and worship at his grave. He is dead.'

Loo burst out crying. The nerves, unstrung by those divine verses, gave way at the thought that he who penned them was dust.

'I shall never read you anything of Byron's again,' said Mr. Leyburne severely.

'What! Did he write more than that?'

'Much more.'

'O, but you will read the rest, won't you?'

'When your nerves are stronger.'

He brought a volume of Milton at the next sitting, but Loo looked tired after the first page of *Paradise Lost*, and confessed her indifference. She liked the 'Hymn of the Nativity,' however, though the classic names in it mystified her. The strong music pleased her keen ear for numbers.

Thus her education progressed with the picture. Mr. Leyburne left her his books to read at her leisure, a period only to be found

after midnight; and she sat up into the small hours, when Mrs. Gurner was calmly reposing in the press-bedstead, and aroused that careful housewife's ire by an undue consumption of candle.

An education such as this—the world of poetry suddenly unveiled to an intelligence sharpened by privation and the bitter experiences of Voysey-street—effected a strangely rapid transformation in this ardent undisciplined nature. This girl's mind was empty of all those objects which distract the attention, or even absorb the mind, of the happier portion of womankind. Dress, pleasure, society, had for her no existence. Half the dreariness of her past life had arisen from the fact that, except cares and troubles, she had nothing to think of. Her mind was a virgin soil, ripe to receive the new seed that fell upon it—the seed of grand thoughts and of melodious verses full of deep meaning. To few other young women of nineteen could Shakespeare and Byron mean so much as they meant to this girl. She knew no bright visions outside those books. Her only knowledge of nature was derived from Regent's-park and Primrose-hill, and rare had been her glimpses even of those unremote landscapes. She had spent a summer afternoon once on Hampstead-heath on the occasion of a school-treat; but that blissful day was long gone by, and the rural scene had faded from her memory behind the mist of years. Yet, by that normal clairvoyance of the imagination which Lord Lytton has described in one of his exquisite essays, she beheld the snow-clad mountains where Manfred held commune with the spirit-world, the old Italian garden where Romeo and Juliet wooed each other in the starlight.

By some gradual process which he perhaps could hardly have explained to himself, the painter extended his hours of work in Voysey-street. There were days when he was not in the vein for the Lamia picture, and a young man with three thousand a year in perpetuity will hardly labour against the grain, having no need to produce pot-boilers. So on these off-days he would put his patient model into some new attitude, and begin a single-figure picture—Imogen, or Olivia, or Juliet, or the Dorothea of Cervantes, or Joan of Arc, as caprice prompted, the model caring nothing, so long as she had his company.

It is possible that Mrs. Gurner would have hardly tolerated so much waste of her grand-daughter's time but for those social luncheons, which served the two women for dinners, and also on account of the more substantial aid afforded the small household by Mr. Leyburne's employment of Jarred as a picture-restorer.

'He's the best customer I've got,' said Jarred to his parent; 'so mind you're civil to him, old lady. I'm not sorry he's taken so to Loo, for she's improved ever so much since she began to sit to him. Keeps her hair tidier, and mends her gown. And after all—though he might be sweet upon the other one to begin with—who

knows what may happen? Men's minds are changeable enough at the best of times, or there wouldn't be so many breach-of-promise cases in the newspapers.'

'Perhaps not, Jarred,' sighed Mrs. Gurner; 'but the breachers—I mean those who break their promise—generally throw over a poor girl to marry a rich one. "Shortly after writing these beautiful letters, full of affection and quotations from Scripture, the defendant married another lady with property." That's how it goes in the newspapers. There's generally property with the second lady. I never saw a case where it was a rich girl left in the lurch for the sake of a poor one.'

'Because rich girls don't demean themselves by bringing actions,' answered Jarred; 'they've got the knowledge of their independence to sustain them, and they're above the consideration of damages.'

'It may be so, Jarred; but experience has taught me to look at the dark side of the picture. I wouldn't allow Mr. Leyburne to come near the place if I thought there was any harm in him; but from what I've seen of him the babe unborn isn't more innocent.'

Influenced, it may be, by some airy vision shaped out of possibilities, Mr. Gurner's soul expanded so far as to move him to give his daughter a sovereign for the purchase of a new gown.

'Never mind your grandmother's rubbish,' he said, when Loo told him of Mrs. Gurner's unwillingness to 'tamper with the stock.' 'Go out and buy some new stuff that hasn't been worn by a pack of—Lord-knows-whats,' said Mr. Gurner, pulling himself up short and coining a word; 'but that's clean and decent as it came from the loom.'

Whereupon Louisa, enraptured, rushed off to Shoolbred's, almost overcome by the size and splendour of the place, and bought a vivid blue merino, which she cut out and half made that evening, under the indignant eyes of her grand-parent.

'If you had money to spend, Louisa, I think you might have laid it out in your own family. I'd have let you had that brown poplin for a sovereign—a dress that must have cost five when it was new.'

'You said you didn't want to interfere with the stock, grandma.'

'Not without having some *quo pro quid* to enter in my book, Louisa; but your custom would be the same as any one else's, except that I should have given you the advantage. I've been asking five-and-thirty shillings for that poplin.'

'There's wine stains all down the front-breadth, grandma, and some little holes burnt in one sleeve, as if it was done with a cigar.'

'You needn't disparage the dress, Louisa, because you've spent your money elsewhere.'

'Besides, father told me to buy a new gown, and that's the long and the short of it,' concluded Loo curtly.

The study of Shakespeare had not as yet improved or modified the familiar language of daily life.

'Perhaps, as your father is in such a generous mood, he'll be kind enough to pay the water-rate,' observed Mrs. Gurner in a biting tone; 'it's been standing long enough.'

Mr. Leyburne was somewhat startled on his next visit by Loo's appearance in the bright blue gown. Its colour reminded him of that blue silk whose musical *frou-frou* he had heard so often in Fitzroy-square. He gave a little guilty look, and began painting with less delay than usual.

Louisa was disappointed. She had expected some praise of her new dress; not that it was his habit to pay her compliments, only a new dress was to her so great an event that she could hardly suppose it would pass unnoticed. She placed herself in the accustomed pose, but her lower lip trembled for a moment, and she looked like a child inclined to cry.

Walter dashed into his work vigorously, but soon flagged; seemed strangely disturbed in temper, and at last flung down his brush with a muttered exclamation that might have been anything.

'It's no use,' he cried impatiently; 'I can't paint you in that glaring blue thing. The flesh tints are nowhere. I must have a dress made immediately—classic drapery, and so on. I can get one from a theatrical costumier.'

'Don't you like blue?' faltered Louisa.

'For some complexions. Not for yours. What made you put that gown on to-day?'

'It's a new one; my father gave it me. I thought you'd like it better than that old dingy one I always wear. I haven't had a new one for two years.'

A little choking sound followed the confession, and poor Loo's mortification found relief in tears. That beautiful bright blue garment which she had toiled to make in the dead hours of the night, when there was profoundest silence, save of errant cats, in Voysey-street; that garment over whose gores, and side-breadths, and placket-hole, and right sleeve and left sleeve, her puzzled brain had perplexed itself, was flouted as a 'glaring blue thing' by the one person whose approbation she most desired. She had fancied that she would appear to him a regenerate creature in that new gown, like a butterfly released from the dull cocoon that had bound it.

The childish sob, the brimming eyes, touched Walter's kindly heart. He ran across the room to her, comforted her with little tender, meaningless words, and drew her towards him with a gentle brotherly caress.

'My dearest child,' he said, 'the dress is all that is charming as a dress. Only it kills your complexion. That pale olive skin of yours is ruined by blue reflections. Why didn't you tell me

you wanted a new dress? Let me choose it for you. But I'll have the Lamia costume made at once. I must paint my drapery from the real thing—Greek robes of white cashmere, with the old key border in scarlet; just enough colour to warm the dead white, and make a vivid contrast with that inky hair.'

She was consoled, but he remained none the less sorry for having wounded her. What a foolish sensitive creature she was, in spite of Voysey-street, the grandmother, the second-hand finery! A very woman, in no wise unsexed by that sharp ordeal of poverty. Until now he had shrunk from offering her anything approaching to a gift. Even his books he had only lent her. But on the day after this little scene he sent her a parcel of silk, a deep rich purple red, the colour of Chambertin. There was lace in the parcel, soft-looking Brussels, or Mechlin, which Mrs. Gurner pronounced worth a small fortune. It was hardly the most serviceable dress that could have been given to a young person in Voysey-street, that wine-dark Naples silk, scarcely a dress to fetch beer in, or even wear sitting at one's ease in the little parlour, where all the domestic processes necessary to existence went on daily. Certainly not a dress in which to wait upon lodgers, or do the 'cleaning.' But, having wounded her by his unkindness, Mr. Leyburne was only eager to atone for his offence, and to his artistic mind the question of utility never presented itself.

'Dear Miss Gurner,' he wrote in the brief note which accompanied the parcel, 'I venture to send you a dress, which I think will suit you better than the blue. Kindly accept it, and wear it, as a proof that you have forgiven me my impertinence about the dress of your own choosing. I have ordered the Lamia costume, and shall be much obliged if you will go to Mercer's, in Bow-street, and have it tried on. I have told them you will call.—Yours always,

'WALTER LEYBURNE.'

Mrs. Gurner turned over the contents of the parcel with many moan.

'It must have cost ten shillings a yard,' she said; 'and there fifteen yards, that's seven pound ten; and six yards of lace, at fifteen shillings to a pound—call it fifteen—four pound ten; twelve pounds for a dress that you can never wear but once in a way on a Sunday afternoon; and then be dressed above your station and draw down evil-minded remarks. Twelve pound would have paid a quarter's rent. What a pity he didn't give you the money!'

'Do you suppose I'd have taken money from him, grandma?' flashed out Loo, wrapping up her parcel indignantly. 'You don't know how to appreciate kindness and generosity. I don't care if I never wear the dress; but I'm proud to think he thought it was fit for me, and bought me such a dress as he'd have bought for a lady.'

Jarred felt nothing but satisfaction at sight of the present.

'Bravo!' said he. 'Hold up your head, my girl; there's money bid for you. Who knows what may happen? I should like to have a look at that doll-faced Miss in Fitzroy-square, and see if she's as good-looking as our Loo, now that she's taken to keep her hair tidy.'

Instead of being grateful for the implied compliment, the girl flamed up at this speech of her father's.

'You've no business to say such things,' she cried; 'you've no right to talk about the young lady that—that—Mr. Leyburne's going to marry. It's all very well for him to be kind, and to make believe to think me a lady; and I'm grateful to him for taking so much trouble. But do you think I don't know that it's all make-believe? do you think I don't know that I'm like the dirt under his feet?'

'Bless and save us!' exclaimed Jarred, 'what a spitfire! Here, give me the tobacco-jar, Loo, and don't talk like a fool. The best horse will win, depend upon it; and it isn't likely I should back a strange stable, when I've got a filly of my own in the race.'

Chapter IX.

'But life is sweet, and mortality blind;
And youth is hopeful, and Fate is kind
In concealing the day of sorrow;
And enough is the present tense of toil—
For this world is, to all, a stiffish soil;
And the mind flies back with a glad recoil
From the debts not due till to-morrow.'

Returning spring, the earliest chirp of blackbirds in the squares, the carol of a wandering lark that has strayed as far from dewy cornfields as St. John's Wood, a basket of primroses bawled in the dusty street, will awaken in most bosoms a sudden yearning for the country. London is all very well, be the square Grosvenor or Fitzroy, while we can draw our curtains, and light our gas, and call it luxury. London looming through the fog, with street lamps gleaming redly, has a sort of gloomy picturesqueness, like that underworld through which Virgil cicerones Dante; but London when skies are blue, and the hawthorns abloom in Twickenham meadows, be it ever so dear to the darlings of fashion, is apt to pall upon that less-favoured race which hath no fellowship with the children of Belgravia, to whom the crowd in Hyde-park at sundown is 'but a gallery of pictures.' Thus perhaps arose in Flora Chamney's breast a new desire for fairer scenes than are to be found within the four-mile radius. A dinner at Richmond, to which Dr. Ollivant and Mr. Leyburne were both invited, served to sharpen this hunger rather than to appease it.

'It's so nice of you to bring us down here, papa darling,' she said in her fond way, as they sauntered along the walk that leads to Thomson's favourite seat, and Earl Russell's rustic cottage, while the marmitons of the Star and Garter stewed eels and larded sweetbreads for their delectation; 'but it only makes me long all the more for the real country. This path and that landscape are ever so beautiful; but I think I can feel London in the air. My eyes are not so sharp as Henry the Eighth's when he stood on that little knoll yonder, and watched for the hoisting of the standard that was to tell him poor dear Anne Boleyn's head was cut off—that's historical fact, isn't it, Dr. Ollivant? I remember reading it at Miss Mayduke's. But my sense of smell seems to tell me London is very near.'

'I should think, if you smelt anything, it would be the dinners cooking at the Star and Garter,' said Dr. Ollivant.

'Come now, papa, when are we to go to the real country?'

'I suppose that means Brighton or Scarborough,' said the doctor.

'It means nothing of the kind. It means some wild lonely place, where papa and I could wander about as we pleased, dressed anyhow, and where I should never feel ashamed of that old Panama hat papa was so fond of wearing last summer. A place where our friends could come to see us if they pleased, and where there would be the sea and boats, and where I could sketch from nature all day long, if I liked. There must be ever so many such places at home and abroad; abroad would be best, for I do so long to see some strange new world, where the common people look like peasants on the stage, and where there is a background of blue mountains, and vineyards, and broad winding river, such as one sees in a drop-scene. Now, dear Dr. Ollivant, please take my part. You know you told papa travelling would be good for him.'

'Did I?' asked the doctor absently. 'I forget.'

'Do you really? How strange! Why, it was your own suggestion, one evening in Wimpole-street; the very first evening we ever spent there.'

'I may have said so. But travelling on the Continent is hardly the kind of thing I should recommend to your father just now. He wants repose.' The grave professional look travelled slowly to the figure beside him. 'An English watering-place might be beneficial, if he liked the idea.'

'I like any idea that my little girl likes,' said Mark Chamney. 'If she has set her heart on the Continent, we'll go on the Continent.'

'No, no, papa,' cried Flora hurriedly, and with a sudden subdued look in her face, as of one to whose mind some grave sad question had newly presented itself; 'no, we will only go where it is best for you. Advise us, Dr. Ollivant. Would it be best to stay at home—would the fatigue of a journey hurt papa?'

'I believe not. Indeed, I think change of air and scene would be good for him.'

'Then I will go anywhere you please, papa,' said the girl, more fondly than ever, with anxious eyes lifted sadly to her father's face and one little hand clinging to his arm. A pretty picture of purest womanhood, and grace more sweet than beauty, yet one that escaped the painter's errant gaze. He was looking across the landscape, dreamily, into the dim blue distance beyond the winding river.

'In that case we'll go to Branscomb. It's the only English watering-place I know or care about. You must remember Branscomb, Ollivant; the place we used to go to when we were boys.'

'I have a faint recollection of spending a day there once, and of universal dreariness.'

'Dreariness! with the sea at your feet? Why, man, there is an everlasting beauty in that which is independent of all the petty prettiness of the land. Set me face to face with the sea, and I don't care what barren rock or parched and sandy waste you give me to stand upon. But if Branscomb is rather a dull out-of-the-way place, the country round is beautiful. I doated upon Branscomb when I was a boy; perhaps the happiest hours of my life were the long sunny days I spent lying on the beach or shying pebbles at the sea-gulls.'

'Pray let us go to Branscomb, papa. I shall love to see the place you were so fond of,' cried Flora, brightening with her father's eagerness. He could hardly be so very ill as she had feared just now from that strange grave look of the doctor's, for he spoke as if there were still pleasures worth living for—as if the warmth and gladness of life were still aglow in his breast. 'You'll come to see us at Branscomb, won't you, Mr. Leyburne?' she said in a gayer tone to the painter. 'I don't think you'd be deterred by a long journey.'

She thought that in those hansom cabs of his, the sound of whose swift wheels and banging of whose doors so often startled her, he must every week travel the distance between London and Edinburgh.

'I beg your pardon,' said Walter, newly awakened from his reverie. 'Who's Branscomb?'

Everything had to be explained to him. He had evidently heard nothing of the conversation for the last quarter of an hour.

'You must come to see us in Devonshire, and teach me to paint the sea. I shall be sketching nearly all day long.'

He would be delighted, of course, not that the sea was in his line, but he would give her such help as he could, directly he had finished a picture he had in hand.

This was early in May. Mr. Chamney and his daughter had not yet been to the Royal Academy.

'I thought your important picture was to be finished and se in last month,' said Flora.

'No. I did think of sending it in this year; but I have be lazy. The picture is only half finished. I didn't want to scar it, you see, and I couldn't get a model I liked for one of r figures.'

'I'm so sorry. I was looking forward to seeing your picture the Exhibition. Then there is nothing of yours, I suppose,' s concluded regretfully.

'Yes. I sent a trifle by way of an experiment; and for a wond it was accepted. Skyed, of course, but it is something to get in.

'O, please tell me all about it!'

'There is so little to tell. It is only a single figure. You mig go through the rooms half a dozen times without noticing it.'

'*I* couldn't,' said Flora naïvely; 'I should know your sty But do tell me the subject.'

'I call it "Esmeralda"—Victor Hugo's heroine, you kno A solitary figure crouching against the dark wall of a mediæ prison. A pale despairing face looking out of dense shadow.'

'It must be grand,' said Flora, enraptured.

'Only to the friendliest eyes. One of the weekly papers sa my flesh-tints suggested putty, and my shadows were a reminiscen of pea-soup.'

'Wretch!' cried Flora; 'envy, of course. Why do they all disappointed painters to turn critics?'

'It isn't fair, is it? Though, for that matter, I should li to walk into some of the exhibitors myself.'

Everything was decided by and by, after dinner. They din in the old coffee-room of the old Star and Garter, which most of remember so well, and in which so many of us have dined in da that are gone and with friends that are dead. They dined in t broad bay-window overlooking that fair valley through which Tham winds his silver ribbon; now making a gentle bend around the clas groves of Ham; now dividing his watery arms to embrace the w low-wooded islet. In this old window they sat while the twilig deepened, planning the Branscomb expedition; Mark Chamney f of talk, Flora animated and happy, Dr. Ollivant more cheerful th usual, only the painter thoughtful, leaning across his folded arm with those dreamy eyes of his fixed on the fading landscape. Flo stole a glance at him now and then, and wondered at his unwont silence. But then, she reasoned, it is in the nature of artists be thoughtful when face to face with nature. Even that famili landscape, which every cockney knows by heart, but which of kind is matchless, might mean inspiration for him.

'I think I'll come with you,' said the doctor, 'if you've objection. I haven't had a holiday since I came from the Contine

except to run across the Channel to hear a lecture, or see an experiment now and then in Paris, and you can hardly call that recreation. I shouldn't wonder if I want a little of that complete repose I am always recommending to my patients.'

'O, do come, Dr. Ollivant!' exclaimed Flora, delighted. 'I never thought of asking you, knowing how precious your time is. But it would be so nice to feel you were taking care of papa. Not that he really needs much care, except mine, I hope,' with an anxious half-appealing look, as much as to say, 'For pity's sake, tell me that all is well.'

'No, Baby, I couldn't have a tenderer nurse than you,' answered the father, drawing the slight figure nearer to him in the friendly twilight. 'And so long as I live your care shall make me happy. Only remember, darling, the best-made machinery will wear out sooner or later, and perhaps some of the strongest may break down all at once, like that wonderful one-horse chaise we were reading about the other night.'

'Papa, papa!' with a burst of tears, 'how can you speak lightly of what would break my heart!'

'Why, Baby! as if I were an oracle, and knew all the ins and outs of destiny. Come, Flo, cheer up, and let us talk about Branscomb. I'll telegraph to a house-agent at Long Sutton to-morrow morning, and tell him to go over and find us lodgings, or a house, and we'll go down the next day. You'll go with us, won't you, Walter? My little girl must have gayer society than two old fogies like Ollivant and me.'

The doctor laughed, that low but somewhat bitter laugh of his, so subdued as hardly to have offended Lord Chesterfield.

'One of the penalties which Science inflicts on her votaries,' said he, 'to be set down as an old fogy at eight-and-thirty.'

'You are very kind,' answered Walter, coming suddenly to life again, as if out of a mesmeric trance; 'but I don't think I could leave London at so short a notice, even for the pleasure of accompanying you and Miss Chamney; and I need hardly say what a temptation that is. I've so much work in hand.'

'Pshaw!' exclaimed Chamney, 'as if a young fellow in your position need care about work.'

'It's foolish, perhaps, but I've set my heart on making some shred of reputation. If you'll allow me to follow you in a week or so, I shall be very glad.'

'As you please,' said Mr. Chamney, piqued; and so the matter ended.

It seemed strange to Flora that there should be any hitch in her programme. She had been accustomed to find the painter a willing slave, not that she had tried him by any means severely, for the ways and works of coquetry were unknown to her simple soul.

But until lately he had hung upon her words as if they were supreme importance to him, and had been studiously attentive her slightest wishes. Of late, within the last few weeks at leas there had been a change too subtle for her to understand, far t indefinite for her to complain of, even in her own thoughts, but ju sufficient to steal a little of life's sunshine from that lot which h seemed to her so perfect in its full measure of happiness.

'I thought I was almost the happiest creature in this world she said to herself; 'but then I counted him as a part of my happ ness. If we should have been mistaken after all, papa and I, a he doesn't care for me—never did care for me any more than f any other girl in whose father's house he might like to spend h evenings!'

The mere suggestion was appalling. How foolish she had bee to think of him as she had thought, to reckon his love in the su total of her happiness! It was her father's fault, no doubt, or th effect of that pleasant easy-going friendship between these two youn people—drawing-lessons, delicious dabblings with the brightes colours Rathbone-place could furnish, duet-singing, voices blendin in dulcet harmonies, a similarity of tastes that seem to mark the as those twin-born beings parted in some ante-natal phase of exist ence, and only perfect when reunited. She had taken it for grante ever so long ago, that he loved her, and that the shred of reputatio he talked of with such proud humility was to be a crown of wild oli laid at her feet. Yet, chilled by this indescribable change in hi and brought face to face with stern reality, what foundation had s for the fabric of her dream-palace? Those thrilling smiles and loo of his, words and whispers that had sunk into her inmost heart, t fond clasp of his hand at parting, the lingering talk on the half-light staircase when he was going away—these might mean nothing af all, might only be the small-change current in that society of whi she knew so little, mere counters, made for show, and worthless withered leaves.

'If he doesn't come to Branscomb I shall know he doesn't c for me,' thought Flora, as they drove back to London in the cl spring night.

They had not gone far before the painter threw off his thoug fulness like a garment, and began to talk with his accustom gaiety. He was, indeed, gayer than usual, with a vivacity t bordered on boisterousness; and Flora's doubts and fears vanish like 'snow-flakes in the river.'

FOLK-LORE OF FAR-OFF LANDS

THERE has been plenty written, perhaps too much, about 'the transmission of the myth;' and the same nursery-tale has been shown to exist, in slightly varied forms, among Hindoos and Russians, among Circassians and Irish. If you read, for instance, Sir Bartle Frere's *Tales of the Deccan*, you will recognise our old friend 'the sleeping beauty in the wood,' and half a dozen more, tricked out in the richer word-painting of the East, but otherwise unaltered.

All this shows, they say, that the stories were invented before 'the break-up of the Aryan race,' before our forefathers moved away to the West and the Hindoos to the East, and each tribe in its own direction, from the central table-land, wherever it was, on which they all grew up together.

So far so good; but how about the non-Aryan races? Language, which is set up as the test of everything, proves (?) them to be wholly distinct from us. Of the Chinese, for instance, a French polygenist, M. Pouchet—a man who believes in many Adams, or (if you will) in many different species of primeval monkey—roundly asserts that if there is a language spoken on the planet Neptune, it could not be more fundamentally unlike our Indo-European tongues than is the speech of the flowery land. And so of Negroes, Malays, and all the rest who are summed-up under the general name of non-Aryan. This 'infallible test' of language proves them to be of a distinct origin; while Sanscrit, and ancient Greek, and Lithuanian, and Erse, and the speech of old Persia and of modern Oude, are in structure so like English and French and German as to be reducible under the same general grammar. There are plenty of languages, easier and less complicated than the Chinese, which go on quite a different system; can't be brought anyhow under the same great principles; seem framed by creatures whose minds had a different bias from those of the early Aryans. But yet these non-Aryan folk are men—we recognise them as such in a thousand ways—'images of God' cut in ebony or yellow wood, or what not; and one remarkable proof of a common nature is that, though the languages are hopelessly irreconcilable, the nursery-tales are often wonderfully similar. You find in the folk-lore of the non-Aryan tribes, who could not possibly have learnt them by tradition, stories answering in all essentials to the chief favourites of our childhood.

How is this? Were the tales invented before Babel, or whatever was the first grand dispersion? Did all mankind start from some one central 'happy valley' after all? Or is the similarity due

to an underlying likeness of thought and feeling among people so outwardly unlike, so that Kaffirs in the south, and Esquimaux in the north, and Japanese in the far east, all hit on much the same tale whereby to teach children the same lesson of life? I can't tell—who can? I can, however, give you a few samples of non-Aryan tales, and among them, remember, I shall not give merely those for which our children's story-books furnish counterparts. So here goes for the Zulu rendering of *Jack and the Bean-stalk*.

A girl is stolen by cannibals, who carry her off into the mountain. Here, as in so many German tales—as also in the *Forty Thieves*—the rock opens when the proper words are said. So the Zulu girl shams sleep—for they have not killed her at once, they are going to fatten her against a great feast; and then the stupid cannibals say the mystic words, their 'open sesame,' in her hearing. By and by they really fall asleep themselves, and then out she goes, carrying with her a calabash full of millet. But the cannibals soon awake, and come tearing after her; so she drops the calabash, and the stupid monsters (all giants and ogres and trolls are stupid, as being the surviving members of 'an inferior race,' I suppose) stop to eat the seed. At last, tired with running, she climbs a tree, and in it whom should she find but her brother, who had had a warning dream, and so had come out to look for her. Well, they climb up and up and up, and never seem any nearer the top; but at last the branches open out into a broad country, with fat meadows, and full streams, and plenty of fine oxen feeding about. So the boy and girl, being very hungry, kill an ox; and as, of course, he carries his *chark* (stick worked with two strings rapidly to and fro on a circular disc of wood) they are able to make a fire, and the ox is soon cooking. But the man-eaters have eaten their millet, and are prowling about in the forest below. They smell the roast meat, and immediately set up a dreadful howling. Then one of them comes to the bottom of the tree and sees the boy and girl, who have been amusing themselves while their dinner was cooking by cutting the hide into thongs and twisting it into a stout rope.

'What shall we do?' says the boy; 'he'll climb up the tree and catch us.'

'No, he won't,' says the girl; 'he's far too big a fool for that. Leave him to me.' So she ties the thong-rope firmly to one of the trees of skyland, and throwing the other end down, she cries coaxingly: 'Come up, come up, dear man-eater; we've got such a fine fat ox, and you shall have some of it. Lay hold of that rope's-end, and work yourself up.' So the cannibal begins to climb. 'Now tell us when you're a long way up, so that you can't see the grass.'

'That's now,' replies he.

'Well, you shall go to grass pretty quickly, you beast!' is the answer, as she unties the rope and flings it over the sky-border.

Down goes the cannibal, and breaks into little pieces at the bottom. His friends come up, and can't think what has happened to him; so they comfort themselves by eating up every bit of him, and then move off from what they suppose must be an unlucky place.

Perhaps you'll say that the idea of skyland, and of some way of getting at it, is innate in the human race. So, it would seem, is the idea of somebody in the moon. We all know Jack and Jill and their pail, transferred bodily to the moon; and the man and his bundle of sticks, placed there according to another story. Here is the Hottentot version of the matter:

Once upon a time, the moon sent the hare with a message to men to comfort them, and tell them that as she died away and rose again, so should they too come to life again after death. But the hare was giddy and thoughtless, and spread far and wide over the world the wrong message; that it should not be with men as with the moon, but that when they died they should never come back to earth again. So the hare went back and told what he had done; whereat the moon was so angry, that she caught up an axe and aimed a blow, meaning to split his head open; but she missed her aim, and only cut his lip; and that's the beginning of what we call 'hare's-lip.' But the hare, maddened by the pain and insult, flew at the moon and almost scratched her eyes out; and those dark marks that you see on the moon's face are the marks of the hare's claws.

In Ceylon, somehow, the hare has got whole into the moon in this way: Sakya-mouni—that is, Buddha—was one day wandering, half-starved, in the forest, when a good hare met him; a bright-minded hare, who could appreciate the holy man's worth.

'Starve not, thou holy man,' said the hare; 'kill and cook and eat me; so shalt thou find strength for thy labours.'

But Buddha will not eat on such terms; he denies himself, and sets the hare on high in the moon's face, to be a token to men and a lesson in piety to aftertime.

The moon-spots' story is very differently told in the Samoan group: a woman had been beating away all day with a mallet, making native cloth; and her child beside her, weary of play and sleep, had begun to cry out:

'I'm so hungry.'

'I daresay you are, but I've nothing for you; so you must just wait.' While she was speaking, up rose the full moon, with that temptingly eatable aspect which led Scroggins, in the English tale, to fancy she was made of green cheese. 'There you are, and a nice big bread-fruit you look, I'm sure; and I warrant you taste as well as you look, too. So, instead of hanging idly up there in the sky, do come down, like a good soul, and let my poor hungry child have a slice off you. It'll only be a wee bit, and you'll never miss it.'

But the moon got in a rage, and did come down, and gobble up woman, child, mallet and all; and there you can see them night after night, in the moon's belly, when she turns it this way.

Once more; you have heard of the tale of Endymion and Selene —how the goddess, finding her shepherd would have none of her threw him into a deep sleep on Mount Latmos, and used to com at sundown to gaze upon his beauty. That signifies, say the grea Max-Müller and Cox, who is his prophet, the rising moon lookin down on the setting sun. If so, the Esquimaux have turned thei minds to the same fact to somewhat different purpose. With them as with 'our Teutonic forefathers,' the moon is the lad, the sun th girl. And so it fell out, that they were both dancing, with the rest o the heavenly host, in a friend's hut; and it was pretty dark, as it i nowadays in an Esquimaux snow-hut. But the sun danced s gracefully, and cut such fine capers, that the naughty moon, forgetting she was his sister, fell over head and ears in love with her. So he went up and gave her a good shake of the shoulders, which is Esquimaux for squeezing the hand tenderly. 'Who is this?' thought Miss Sun, but it was too dark to catch the features, and perhaps all Jupiter's satellites may have danced by and distracted her attention; so she thrust her hand into the soot of one of the smoky lamps, and gave Master Moon a dab on the cheek, saying to herself, 'I'll surely know that chap by and by!' Well, they danced on, in and out, and round and round, till lamp-trimming time came and it got lighter in the hut; and then of a sudden the two passed close t each other, and Miss Sun saw to her horror that it was her own brother She didn't wait to hear a word, but rushed off, and he at her heel and all the stars after him—just like 'Græmes of the Netherl clan,' in Lord Lochinvar's ballad. But the sun kept first by long way, and got to the world's end, and jumped off into the s so did the moon and the rest, but they never caught her; and t go on chasing and chasing round and round for ever; and when turns his sooty face to the earth he is so dark that you don't anything of it.

Were-wolves—you must have read all about them. The G and Romans, ay, and their masters in myth-making, believed in The very sun-god became a wolf, Lycaon; much as among Algonquins he was supposed to take the form of a great white Skin-changers (*versipelles*) the Romans called these were-wolves ing that while they kept their human form the hair grew inwa that when they wished to become wolves they just turned the inside out. Of course in the Middle Ages, when exorcists a such chartered torturers flourished, folks now and then g flayed to find out the ingrowing hair; M. Taine tells of su at Padua in 1541. And just as witch-hunting made some wretches believe themselves really devil-ridden, so were-wo

made a few monsters turn their diseased appetites to human flesh, in the belief that they really were wolf-possessed. The history of Jean Grenier, for instance, is almost too horrible; but there is no doubt this half-witted wretch did firmly believe himself to be a wolf. Well, you have the same tale among the bushmen. A Hottentot was once faring across the Karroo along with a woman and her child, when a long way off they saw a herd of wild horses. 'O, I'm so hungry! If I could but turn myself into a lion, I'd soon get us all a meal,' said the man. The woman said nothing, but sat down and began to peel off her skin as if it had been a tight-fitting suit; and there she was, a lioness bounding over the plain. She soon brought down a horse and lapped its blood; but the man was terribly frightened, and climbed up a tree, and would not come down till she had put on her human skin and got back to her former shape. Then they all three had a hearty dinner off wild horse, and went on their way rejoicing. So in North America, it needs no very 'great medicine' to turn into wolf or bear; while among the Malay islands, says Mr. Wallace, some men are supposed to change at will into crocodiles for the purpose of devouring those they have a grudge against.

Well, thus you see that not among the different members of the great Aryan family only are the germs of many of our best-known stories discoverable. They seem to belong to humanity. A lively American, Professor Fiske of Harvard University, noticing how the 'William Tell legend' (for it is a legend), and that of which the Welsh form celebrates the death of Gelert's faithful hound, and a good many others besides, are found everywhere, says: 'We must admit, then, that these fireside tales have been handed down from parent to child for more than a hundred generations; that the primitive Aryan cottager, as he took his evening meal of *yava* and sipped his fermented mead, listened with his children to the stories of Boots, and Cinderella and the Master Thief, in the days when the squat Laplander was still master of Europe, and the dark-skinned Sudra was as yet unmolested in the Punjab.' True; but may we not go farther, and say that, finding these tales, or their counterparts, among Zulus and Mongols and Malays and Red Indians, we must either pronounce them to be 'innate ideas,' or else hold that men had invented them in the old, old time when the differences between Aryans and non-Aryans had not yet grown up? Sir H. Rawlinson seems to prove, from the earliest Assyrian remains, that, 'in the beginning,' Hamite and Shemite and Japhetian were all one—that even what afterwards became of the Aryan tongues were then 'agglutinative,' like the Red-Indian of to-day. Some one, too, has just 'proved' that the old Peruvian was a kindred speech to the Sanskrit! No wonder, then, that the same stories are current all the world over.

I shall end with one more story, the connection of which with its Indo-European counterpart I shall leave you to discover. Uthla-

kanyana is the Zulu 'Boots,' whose wit is always too sharp for the man-eaters—dolts who in the Zulu 'nursery tales' (given so pleasingly by Canon Callaway) answer to the Norse trolls and to our always humbuggable giants. Once, on a journey, Uthlakanyana fell in with a man-eater. 'Ho, Mr. Cannibal, shall we fare on together?' 'With all my heart.' So they snared a leopard, and killed and ate some of it. By and by the cannibal said: 'Here is a pleasant place, and the cattle will come to drink, so we shall never want game. Let us stop here and build us a hut.' Before the house was finished some cows came down, and they killed two; but the man-eater's cow was lean and the other was fat. Wherefore thought Uthlakanyana, 'This cannibal will want to have my fat cow, and will kill me.' So he said softly, 'Let us now thatch our hut; then we can get our meal. You see sky; so we shall have wet.' 'You are right, child of my sister,' said the man-eater; 'you are a man indeed in saying that.' 'Do you then go outside; I will go within and push the thatching-needle for you in the house.' The cannibal went up; his hair was very, very long (are there not tribes of long-haired non-negro cannibals still in the mountains of Western Africa?). Uthlakanyana thatched-in the hair, tying it very tightly, taking it by separate locks, that it might be fastened firmly to the house. Then the rogue went out, and began to eat the fat cow which had been roasting. The man-eater cried, 'What are you doing, child of my sister? Let us just finish the house, and then we can eat together.' 'Come down, then,' said the other; 'my thatching is finished.' But the man-eater tried in vain to come down. 'Child of my sister,' he cried, 'how have you managed your thatching?' 'See you to that,' was the reply. 'I have thatched well, and I will not have any dispute. I am about to eat in peace, I alone, of my fat cow.' So the cannibal raved and stormed, and called for justice; but the Zulu hero calmly went on eating. And by and by there came rain and hail and lightning, and Uthlakanyana took all the meat into the house, and lit a fire, and the hailstones struck the man-eater that he died. So when the storm cleared, Uthlakanyana went out, and said, 'Uncle, just come down, the sky is clear, and there is no more lightning. Why are you silent?' But there was none to answer; so he ate his cows alone till he had finished them. And then he went his way.

Now, if that does not remind you of some of your own fairy tales, why, you must wait till I make another selection from Dr. Bleek (*Hottentot Fables*), and Canon Callaway (I believe the Scotch Episcopal Church has just made him their first missionary bishop), and others, to try to convince you of the substantial identity under surface unlikeness of the one touch of Nature making the whole world kin.

H. S. FAGAN, M.A.

AUNT LORA'S LONG AGO

I was visiting Ireland and my great-aunt for the first time. Her lovely home, Glenbawn, nestled at the base of one of the Wicklow mountains, Sugarloaf. It was the winter of 1867-8, and all our neighbours of note had moved into Dublin, driven from the lonely hills by the terrors of the Fenian movement, which was the one engrossing topic in every mouth and with every class.

I had come over to Christmas with auntie, as my father had been obliged to leave unexpectedly for the West Indies—a hurried journey, on which it was inexpedient for me to accompany him; so our London home was shut up and I was consigned to the care of his Irish aunt, of whom I had often heard, but whom I had never seen. She had welcomed me lovingly; we had held a consultation on my first arrival at Glenbawn, and had decided on biding at home in auntie's own cosy nest amid her home duties, rather than spend an idle winter in unhomelike lodgings in town; so I settled down as contentedly as might be to wear away the months which lay between me and my father's home-coming.

We had pleasant talks in the long evenings when the curtains were drawn, the turf-fire heaped up with an oaken log in its ruby heart, its ruddy glare striving with the soft steady light of the wax candles which burned in old silver branched candlesticks on every table and bracket in the pretty quaint drawing-room. Aunt Lora's tiny but stately figure, with its rich black silk and delicate laces, the soft silver hair rolled back and almost covered by a cloud of ce fastened by large diamond pins and floating far below her waist. e was simply lovely, and I used to look up at her from my pet nge on the soft white rug with the passionate admiration of a for the first realisation of her ideal woman. To me—insignifi- brown mouse that I was—with all her seventy years she seemed ctly beautiful.

ne night we had talked a long while of the foolish Fenians— sad, sad story of poor lovely Ireland, with her desolate cabin- and exiled children; then it was she told some bits of her o.

was born,' auntie said, 'in the terrible '98, when the rage red which had smouldered for years among the Irish pea- urst into a flame which enveloped and scathed the whole ide. Centuries of misrule had laid the train; measures of n—necessary, it may be, but certainly severe, nay, cruel— he spark. The Habeas Corpus was suspended, govern-

ment spies lurked on every side; the horses of the poor farmers were impressed for baggage transport; the concurrence of seven magistrates was sufficient warrant to consign to the Fleet, almost without even the form of trial, any number of persons found at unlawful assemblies; soldiers were billeted without the least pretence or regard had to right or justice, and the conduct of the yeomanry was in too many instances aggravating beyond measure. I have heard the story of those days from my mother—your great-grandmother, darling. My father lodged a whole regiment of yeomanry here in this old house, with its outbuildings. Looking back in quiet after-years, it seemed to me like a dream too weird and dreary to have been more than a dream—the quiet homestead filled with armed men, the kindly country sounds silenced; in their stead the clash of arms, the angry voices of men ready and eager to meet death, so that with it they found revenge; the lurid glare of the rebel beacons lighting up the soft summer-night landscape; the ceaseless tramp and tumult of a camp; the terrible rumours which floated, it seemed, on the very airs of heaven; the news brought in by disguised scouts of the burning, by the rebels, of Scullabogue Barn, crowded with three hundred prisoners, whom they flung back into the flames when they did manage to escape through door or window; the capture of the mails in different parts of Ireland, the burning of the coaches when the bags were secured, the murder of the passengers and guards; the wild excesses of Father Murphy in the south, whose house and chapel the soldiers had burned down; he had vowed a fearful vengeance, which he began on the dreadful twenty-third of May, by setting fire to the house of every Protestant in the little town of Kilcormick and murdering the owners. May had its catalogue of horrors; they were to be surpassed by the massacres which took place during June in the rebel camp on Vinegar Hill, but the horror reached its climax with the murders on Wexford bridge. I will not dwell on this, dear, but will tell you that late one evening towards the end of June a weary blood-stained wounded fugitive crept in here with the news. The tale he told maddened the soldiers, even the tender heart of my father hardened against the torturers of some of the best and noblest men in Ireland, many of them his own loved friends. There was a hurried call to arms, a midnight march, from which there was to be no home-coming for him and for many beside. He was colonel of the regiment, and rode off with set face and gleaming eyes which never softened, even as he kissed good-bye to wife and child—my sister Meg, your grandmother—I was not born then. Three days—a long, hot, breathless agony of suspense for poor mother—did not bring him back; with the dawn of the fourth came the heavy tramp of armed men; her weary eyes, which had not closed since she had looked her last on her husband, watched a band of rebels march sul-

lenly down the hill beside the house, looking neither to left nor right, speaking no word, leaving a broad crushed track as they went through the dew-hung corn, the rosy dawn-light glinting on their pikes stained with dull crimson, on the wide black banner with its blood-red cross and motto, "Murder without Sin." They passed down the valley and away, and still my mother watched. At last there came the well-known uniforms over the winding road, but without my father; he had left them three hours before to ride across a bog, a short cut to home—it was not possible for the soldiers to cross it in a body. His brother officers had tried to dissuade him; but, laughing at the idea of risk and anxious to relieve my mother's fears, he rode off; never to be seen again in life but by his murderers. Weary as they were, a detachment was at once sent off to commence a search which lasted till nightfall, when, lying naked and disfigured in a deep bog-hole, they found a body. My mother's loving eyes alone recognised in one poor maimed hand that of her husband. That night I was born.'

'But, auntie, knowing all this, how can you love these people, live amongst them, help them, as you do—the children of your father's murderers?'

'Lora, the wrongs of centuries had maddened them. My mother lived six lonely years after that summer morning when her heart was broken. In life and death she taught us the lesson of forgiveness. No, the terrible excesses of '98 are more easily condoned than the horrible cold-blooded murders of later years—cowardly, cruel!—the shooting of the defenceless from a hedge-shelter.

'Shall I tell you another story? You have heard of your aunt Mabel; from the time of your grandmother's death she had been my child and darling: your father was in Demerara, and we were alone in the world but for each other, and we were very happy together. She married at eighteen; her husband was an Englishman, a younger son, not rich; he had been in the army for a few years, but sold out on his marriage and bought a farm on the other side of the valley. My wedding-gift to them was their new home, it was a mere farmhouse when Will bought it; but during their wedding-tour, which lasted for six months, and which they finished by a round of visits amongst his people in England, I had the whole house remodelled and enlarged, made into a fitting home for my pet. How I enjoyed furnishing it, remembering all her pretty whims and fancies!

'It was a bright home-coming. With what pretty glee Mabel ran from room to room, delighted with everything I had done for her! Then the pretty shy grace with which she took her place as mistress. One little happy week passed, to which I shall always look back as the last of real happiness in my life. You know, dear, I am happy now and content, as an old woman should be whose life is warmed by the loving-kindness of every one around her, who has

been given the abiding joy, which never grows insipid, of being able to brighten other lives with some of the brightness given to her own. And then there is the best and dearest joy of all—the knowledge that the loves of long ago are kept safely in God's own care; to be mine again one day—very soon now—when I too reach the world where the incompleteness of this will be rounded and perfected.

'But this little week was happy and warm with joy of another kind which I have missed ever since. It was Christmas-eve; all day my darling had been busy with decorations and preparations for the next day, when all the tenants on their new estate were to be entertained in the servants'-hall.

'Well, dear, I remember coming down that afternoon. I had been busy writing in my own room; I found the whole house a bower of greenery, the last touch given, and May and her husband resting before the fire in the hall, whose cedar wainscot sent out ruddy gleams and spicy fragrance in acknowledgment of the light and warmth. She smiled up at me from a nest of skins, among which she was cosily lounging, resting her bright head against Will's knee, and held up two pretty dusty hands to be exclaimed at.

"We were talking of last Christmas," she said, when I had taken the chair Will drew forward for me. "How long ago it seems, and how strange that then we did not know each other! Will scorching in India, you and I Christmasing at Glenbawn, auntie. O, I wish I could give you those eighteen years, Will! It is so dreary to think you were not in them."

"You will give me the next eighteen, and many a year beside; that will content me, little wife. I am sure you were a mischievous monkey, and I am thankful I did not discover you until aunt Lora had tamed you."

"You wicked unsentimental boy!"

'And the dusty hands were twisted in a thick brown beard which was temptingly near; and so they laughed and chatted, children as they were, quite unchecked by my presence, until a servant came in with a message for me. It was news of the sudden illness of one of the servants here. My first impulse was to come home without delay; but they would not hear of my doing so. It was settled that Will should drive over, calling for the doctor as he passed through the village, and if he did not bring a good report, he promised to take me back immediately on his return, if I would consent to wait patiently so long. I consented—would that I had not! All might have been—but no; there are no might-have-beens with God.'

Aunt Lora covered her face for a minute, then she went on more steadily.

'I remember all—every word and incident of that evening. We watched Will drive away into the gray twilight, and then came back

to the fireside until the dressing-bell rang, while my pet used every loving wile to keep me from dwelling too anxiously on M'Carthy's illness. We grew anxious, as the evening went on, for my servant; Will's prolonged absence made me fear she was seriously ill. Now and then the young wife shivered a little as the fierce blast, which now at intervals swept up the valley, with one sudden gust rushed by to die away among the higher hills. It was the snow-wind, we knew it well, and longed that our traveller were safely home. Mabel had ordered dinner in her morning-room, from which there was a view of the road along which he would return; she thought, too, it would be easier to warm and brighten it than the large dining-room. We stood for a long while at the window watching the heavy woolly clouds rolling and massing themselves in the livid sky: there had been a light fall of snow in the morning, enough to whiten the trees and grass, but we could distinguish the dark line of the road as it wound round into the valley. Again and again the wind swept up with its wild angry moan, bending the trees in its course and hiding them in thick clouds of snow-powder swept from their tossing branches: then again the din would hush and a great stillness fall on the outside world. We watched till I saw my child was growing pale, and I drew her into the warm room, bright with fire and candle-light, the pretty rose-coloured room, where the shining silver and crystal of the dinner-table looked brighter still in contrast to the outer gloom. I pretended to be hungry, that she might be forced to give up the watch for a while. We sat down to dinner, leaving the warmest seat for Will, and each tried to eat for the sake of the other; but at every gust the sweet little face opposite me grew whiter, and a dark line began to show beneath the soft eyes; as yet the worst we feared for Will was a struggle with the storm, while we sat at home wrapped from cold and all discomfort.

'The evening wore on; dinner was removed; the supper-table laid, covered with every dainty the little wife could suggest. She hunted up a fur-lined dressing-gown, which he had used when stationed in Canada, and hung it before the fire; then she went back to her post beside the window, having warmed the hearth and spread the table, all for Will—poor Will, who should never more enjoy food or warmth in this world.

'Lights were placed in every window to guide him through the snow, which was now falling blindingly, darkening sight and hushing sound. Servants were sent out with spades and lanterns; but unhappily the butler was old and feeble, and the only other man at our disposal was Will's soldier-servant, an Englishman, quite ignorant of the neighbourhood. They returned without having been able to get farther than where the road divided at the head of the valley.

'As the small hours crept by, the cold grew intense outside the circle warmed by the fire. I tried to wrap Mabel in a mantle, but

she put away my hand impatiently, and shook herself free from the soft folds.

"I will not be warm. Will is cold."

'And she turned to the window once more with a slight shudder, while her weary eyes gazed on into the whirling blinding snow-fall.

'At two o'clock I again tried to induce her to lie down, telling her what I tried to believe myself, that her husband had stayed weatherbound at Glenbawn; that Brown Colleen, the mare he had taken, could find her way home to her stables on the darkest night; that—in short, I used every means—coaxing, remonstrance, command, all in vain; words she did not seem to hear. When I tried to draw her away she pushed me gently from her, and the white lips moved, though no sound came from them.

'At three o'clock the wind lulled, the snow-whirl ceased. I was holding her burning hand in mine, longing intensely for morning, turning with a sick shudder from the pictures which *would* pass before my aching brain of Will sleeping his last sleep beneath the drift, when suddenly she snatched away her hand and started up.

"He is coming! I hear him!" She flew into the hall, where an immense fire was blazing on the hearth. "Throw on the yule log!" she cried impatiently to the servants who were standing about. "Don't I tell you he is coming—he is here!"

'I signed to them to obey her, and the great pine trunk which had been carted home so merrily only a week ago, which she and Will had garlanded a few hours since, was flung on. I asked softly whether they heard anything; but the men shook their heads, and indeed the depth of the snow must have hushed any sound. They said if their master had waited in shelter at the mountain foot till the storm subsided, the horse might make his way beneath the shadow of the rocks which overhung the road, and which must have kept a comparatively clear track.

'Mabel had gone back to her window. Now she rushed in, her face quivering and flashing with excitement.

"Auntie, he is here! I see him!"

'She began tugging furiously at the fastenings of the great door. Stronger hands came to her aid, in an instant it was flung open, and before any one could interfere she had rushed out; we saw the white flying figure flit over the snow like a wraith—snow-drift so deep and light that it seemed a bird must have sunk into it; we saw the dogcart creeping slowly under the cliff at a foot-pace, Will's upright soldierly figure showing dark and clear against the livid background; we saw her reach him and spring up to him; then there was a silence. I do not know why we all looked on as at a scene in which we had no part, until a cry, low, anguished, exceeding bitter, laden with terror and heartbreak, cut through the dead heavy stillness. I felt hands holding me back; I saw dark figures

struggling across the white lawn; then *something* was carried in and laid on the soft furs before the blaze—*something*, not Will, never Will any more. The kind strong hands gave back no answering pressure to the cold clasping fingers which clung to them, the loving eyes had lost their light; he lay beside her as he had lain not twelve hours ago, on the same spot, in his own hearth-glow; but it was Will no longer. He was dead.

'Something crueller and fiercer than the storm had been abroad that bitter night. He had been tempted from home to his death; the murderer had reckoned on his loving heart answering to the call of sorrow and sickness; the false message as to M'Carthy's illness had been but a lure to draw the victim to the toils. He had set out on his return journey, dropped the doctor at his own door with a merry good-night, and driven away to his death; his murderer only knew the rest.

'His wife's white dress was covered with crimson stains when we raised her from her husband's body. She did not faint or cry; she even smiled, a faint weary smile.

"Will is so cold," she said.

'When we brought her wine, she put it to his dead lips.

"Will first—poor Will!" and even while she spoke her head fell again on his breast.

'All that night she clung to him with a clasp which we could not loose without using force, which I could not endure to do. We sent for the doctor; he made his toilsome way through the snow only to tell us what we knew too well already.

'Will was dead, and all night long his wife lay motionless upon his breast; great fires burned, tables stood covered for the master, who was never to feel cold or hunger more. When the chill late winter morning broke, Mabel too had entered into the great eternal sunshine of God.'

The next day aunt Lora took me to the grave where wife and husband slept together. The moss, 'God's blessing on the grave,' had crept softly, greenly above them; the scarlet letters at the base of the white cross, which told the story of William Forsythe Long and Mabel his wife, gleamed redly through the holly wreath which hung there, a message of love and remembrance from the living to the dead.

No trace of the murderer was ever discovered; it was supposed to be one of those all-but-motiveless crimes which have desolated so many Irish homes during the last forty years. Mr. Long was an Englishman; he had begun his reign well—was full of schemes to benefit his tenantry. His crime was having taken the place of an Irish family, who had emigrated when a long career of extravagance had made it impossible for them to live at home any longer.

This was one of the stories aunt Lora told me of her 'long ago.'

EXTREMES

When a power or faculty is abused many find their remedies, not in the limitation, but in the abolition, of the power or faculty in question —if, indeed, that be possible.

The ridicule heaped upon doctors by Molière is well known. A candidate for a medical diploma is examined, and, after giving to various questions on the treatment of different cases the same uniform answer—

> 'Clysterium donare,
> Postea seignare,
> Ensuita purgare'—

receives his degree by acclamation.

In speaking of Molière's doctor (Mauvilain), Louis XIV. said one day to the great comedian: 'You have a doctor; what does he do for you?' 'Sire,' replied Molière, 'he prescribes remedies for me. I don't take them, and I get well.' When any section of the public is converted to Molière's notions of medicine *in esse*, they become sceptical about the science *in posse*, and refuse any doctor's aid under any circumstances. Others, getting tired of the continual supplies of medicine, go in for homœopathy and *infinitesimal doses*. The converts in this case are chiefly women; but then do not women govern the world? The wife of the Dean of Marshton prescribes *belladonna* for her husband's erysipelas, and *plumbum* for the painter's colic.

In the same town vaccination has once or twice been unskilfully or unsuccessfully performed, and then all are converted to anti-vaccination. I know country districts where conscientious and able men find the greatest difficulty in performing their medical duties amongst the poor, who place their faith in herbalists, homœopaths, bone-setters, anti-vaccinators, and anti-sanitarians, and have been converted chiefly by the clergy, who are frequently the greatest enemies to medical science.

If we turn to law, we find that some people believe in the statement of Léandre, who says (in Racine's play of *Les Plaideurs*) 'Voilà votre portier et votre secretaire; vous en ferez, je crois, d'excellents avocats: ils sont fort ignorants;' and become their own advocates, invariably justifying the force of the old proverb, that a man under such circumstances has a fool for his client.

The people, however, do not stand alone in extreme reaction. Did not Plato banish poetry and the drama from his ideal republic because poets and dramatists were not always orthodox in their sentiments? Wordsworth also says:

> 'Poets, vain men in their mood,
> Travel with the multitude.'

Yet Plato's philosophical jewels owe much of their beauty and their currency to their extremely poetical and dramatical setting. Plato's conduct in this matter resembles Mr. Lowe's. The latter owes much of his force and power in speaking to his classical training; still he has declared himself the foremost champion against such training.

It seems strange that any one should have to write an 'Apologie for Poetrie:' yet Sir Philip Sydney says:

'I have just cause to make a pittiful defence of poore poetrie, which, from almost the highest estimation of learning, is fallen to be the laughing-stocke of children.' Then he forcibly adds, 'Truly to all them that professing learning inveigh against poetrie, may justly be objected that they goe very neer to ungratefulness, to seek to deface that, which, in the noblest languages and nations that are knowne, hath been the first light-giver to ignorance, and first nurse, whose milk by little and little enabled them to feed afterwards of tougher knowledges; and will they now play the hedgehog, that, being received into the den, doth drawe out the host? or rather the vipers that with their birth kill their parents?' Against many *root and branch* reformers, the accusation of ingratitude may be fairly brought.

We need scarcely work out this thought as applied to Politics, for in these days is not every one a politician? If philosophy has been brought from heaven to earth, political science may be said to have descended to the kitchen and the taproom.

In these latter days we are even told that Christianity must soon be abolished, and retreat before the superior sciences of sociology and biology. As the child, we are told, submits to the pang of separation from its parents, even so must the infancy of the world submit to give up its divine origin, part with its picture and story books, and, renouncing the milk for babes, feed on the strong meat to be provided for men of the nineteenth century. The reformers reverse Wordsworth's lines—

> 'Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home:
> Heaven lies about us in our infancy.'

And tell us that, having progressed from a brutish and barbarous state, we have our golden age to come.

Christianity must go: yet Mr. Lecky (by no means a partisan of the Christian religion) says in his *History of European Morals:*

'It is the peculiarity of the Christian types, that while they have fascinated the imagination, they have also purified the heart. . . . More than any spoken eloquence, more than any dogmatic teaching, they transform and subdue his character, till he learns to realise the sanctity of weakness and suffering, the supreme majesty of compas-

sion and gentleness. The high conception that has been formed of the sanctity of human life, the protection of infancy, the elevation and final emancipation of the slave classes, the suppression of barbarous games, the creation of a vast and multifarious organisation of charity, and the education of the imagination by the Christian type, constitute together a movement of philanthropy which has never been paralleled or approached in the Pagan world.'

If after this we are to make a new God and a new religion, do not at all events let us adopt the new God and the new religion of Auguste Comte, with reference to whom (I think) it has been wittily said, 'There is no God, and Comte is his prophet.'

If we take metaphysics, we are told on the one hand that the Deity is *pure being* (whatever that may mean); on the other, that *pure being is pure nothing.*

Some moralists tell us that our motive to action is self-interest, others sympathy. While one section of psychologists declares that all our notions depend on experience, another as emphatically asserts that we have some notions not only transcending, but antecedent to and independent of all experience.

In some of these matters the celebrated eclecticism of M. Victor Cousin was severely criticised by Sir William Hamilton, who seems to say, in so many words, that eclecticism is no philosophy at all. This statement may be true, but it is self-evident that an exclusively one-sided system will leave many problems partially or completely unsolved. 'Why philosophise at all?' some one will say. Because we cannot help it. We are in a circle. We cannot prove the absurdity of philosophy without philosophising: then we stultify ourselves and the validity of our reasoning. Philosophy cannot be altogether useless, if it succeed in showing us that our highest knowledge is a learned ignorance.

If we turn to topics of interest at the present moment, we find extreme reactions in the discussions raised with reference to the teaching, the government, and the discipline of our schools.

The subjects taught in the old grammar and elementary schools were tolerably fixed and uniform. Now they are so unsettled and so multiform as to run counter to the sound maxim *Non multa sed multum legendum.*

The mode of teaching is altered. The old custom of perpetual drill and constant repetition is to be superseded by easy and pleasant methods, which, however, frequently cut or conceal the real difficulties of the subject. Parents soon will believe that their children can run before they can walk, or that a child may learn to walk without mechanical aid, and without any failures in its first attempts. Sir John Coleridge expressed a general truth when he said that the mechanical faculty of memory is far less exercised than formerly.

Crude facts are, of course, useless *per se;* but reasoning must be

based on facts, or else dwindle down to superficiality and flippancy —not very scarce or valuable commodities in these days.

The old school discipline is fast vanishing. Is corporal punishment to be prohibited? If arguments from Nature are not worthless, we see that Nature often inflicts extreme physical punishment on those who (sometimes unwittingly) break her laws.

Is corporal punishment inflicted on boys at school to cease, while its efficacy on garotters and wife-beaters is not doubted? The race of boys and the race of niggers are (as it seems) to be the pet animals of this generation.

The question is not new. Sir Roger Ascham says he 'dined upon the 10 day of December, in the year 1563, in Sir William Cicell's chamber, hir Highnesse Principalle Secretarie. Not long after our sitting doune: "I have strange news brought me," sayth M. Secretarie, "this morning, that diverse scholers of Eaton be runne awaie from the schole for fear of beating."' Thereupon a discussion arose on beating. 'M. Haddon said that the best scholemaster of our days was the greatest beater, and named the person.'

Ascham interposed with the remark that 'wise men do thinke that that came to pass rather by the great towardness of the scholer than by the great beating of the master.'

Ascham, however, though he advocated '*jentleness in teaching*,' did not hesitate to say that he would '*have everie vice severelie corrected*.' Perhaps his distinction is a proper one, though it is just possible that a boy may refer a vice to his constitution and temperament with as much justice as he can idleness and inattention, which many do not seem to consider as vices.

Then what about the external government of schools? That seems to depend on a warden, a secretary, a council, trustees, assistant-masters, parents, pupils, and the public. Any one of these can create a party strong enough to turn a large institution topsy-turvy, and to undermine the autocracy of the head-master.

Reform was certainly wanted in our large endowed schools, but we may be travelling too fast for safety. 'Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.' After all, however, reactions are useful; and if truth lies between extremes, no great results can be promoted by silencing the advocates of extreme views. The most extravagant error has usually some admixture of truth, and the whole truth is generally the light kindled by the friction of extremes.

I suppose few men would now maintain the old doctrine of *innate ideas*, or of *inspiration*, in its entirety; and few would deny that Rationalism and Scepticism (however much they may have run riot) have served as a wholesome check upon superstition and the *laudator temporis acti*.

'We know that what in one age has been called the spirit of rebellious reason, has in another been allowed by all good men to have

been nothing but a sound judgment exempt from superstition.' Of course there is a wrong as well as a right attitude of doubt. 'The doubt of the former is a doubt of darkness, which never issues to the light, but leads us always farther from it: the latter is a doubt which is born of the light, and which aids in a certain sort to produce light in its turn.'

In politics the party of *reform* has been a beneficial reaction against the party of *stability*, and after the collision of the two rival schools most people are beginning to realise that 'cold obstruction's apathy' does not necessarily imply stability, and that revolution is not identical with reform.

It has hitherto been too fashionable to suppose that the cause of a phenomenon in mental, moral, or political science is simple, not complex; hence we have seen men dividing themselves into hostile factions, without recognising what a world of wisdom is concealed in the principle, '*ab hoste doceri*.' Truly has it been said:

> 'Les hommes la plupart sont étrangement faits:
> Dans la juste nature on ne les voit jamais:
> La raison a pour eux des bornes trop petites:
> En chaque caractère ils passent ses limites,
> Et la plus noble chose, ils la gâtent souvent
> Par la vouloir outrer et pousser trop avant.'

If there is danger in disturbing settled convictions, there is profit also. We are moved to examine the grounds of our convictions, and our systems founded upon them; and if we *happen* to hold the truth merely as a result of prejudice, custom, or authority, then (in the words of the late J. S. Mill) 'this is not knowing the truth.'

A passive hereditary creed, in many cases, 'remains, as it were, outside the mind, incrusting it and petrifying it against all other influences addressed to the higher parts of our nature; manifesting its power by not suffering any fresh living conviction to get in, but itself doing nothing for the mind or heart, except standing sentinel over them to keep them vacant.' A truth may be ever so well established, but even then nothing is lost by hearing it argued *pro* and *con*, for (to quote the same philosopher once more) 'the fatal tendency of mankind to leave off thinking about a thing when it is no longer doubtful is the cause of half their errors.'

Truth is the daughter of Time, and if all our old and cherished notions are to be disintegrated, may our reformers be justified in their boast—

> 'Of old things all are ever old;
> Of good things none are good enough:
> We'll show that we can help to frame
> A world of better stuff.'

J. N. WILLAN, M.A.

A REVELATION FROM THE SEA

'I MAY write to you, Alice, mayn't I?'

Alice shook her head. 'Better not,' she said; 'much better not.' Still the denial was faint.

'But I *shall* write,' said the young man warmly; 'it is all the comfort I have. I don't ask you to write to me, but I will write to you, and—'

'He would be angry,' said Alice, shaking her head; 'no, you really mustn't.'

'All right,' said the sailor, with a warm sunny smile; 'to your sister then—all right. '*I* know you'll go and ask her for a letter sometimes. Good-bye, darling—one kiss.'

The kiss was given hurriedly and surreptitiously, and the sailor sprang from the landing-stage into a boat that was waiting alongside, and presently the oars were flashing in the sunshine as she made rapidly for a barque lying in the stream. Alice stood and watched the receding boat, watched it till it reached the ship and was hauled up on the davits. Presently the cheery song of the sailors was heard over the water, the clink of the windlass, as they hauled the anchor home. Then she shook out her sails and departed. A shore-boat, however, had put off from the ship at the very last moment, and came slowly against the tide towards the land. It reached the landing-stage, and a wizened elderly man landed and came up the stairs.

'Well, Alice,' he said, 'well, you've waited a long time for your Dicky—good girl, good girl! Now, my birdie, we'll go home to our little cage.'

Alice sighed and put her hand in his arm, and they went off, he with a springy shambling gait, meant to be sprightly and juvenile; she with a slow lifeless step that yet kept pace with him.

Richard Toft the shipowner, who had just landed, was seventy years old or more, and he had married Alice Graham, who was only nineteen. But then Toft was the richest man in the port of Melford Regis, and everybody said she had done well for herself. There had been some silly love-passages between her and William Black, the son of Widow Black of Woodbine-cottage, but he was only a mate in one of Richard's ships, and could never have made a home for her, to say nothing of the misery of marrying a sailor, and being a widow, as it were, for four years out of five. Now it wasn't in the course of nature that Dicky Toft should live for ever; and then, if she played her cards well, what a happy woman she might

be! She would have to play her cards, mind you, for she was a poor girl when she married, and Dicky had kept all his money at his own disposal; but then what fool like an old fool? and a pretty girl, like Alice, ought to be able to wind him round her little finger.

Certainly Mr. Toft was wonderfully proud of his wife, and with good cause, for she was one of the prettiest girls in Melford. To be sure, after her marriage she seemed to fade a little, whilst Dicky seemed to grow young and green again, and responded to all the raillery of which he was the subject, as archly and wickedly as any grizzled old monkey on a perch.

Nothing was too good for Alice in Mr. Toft's opinion. He bought her shawls from the Indies, beautiful muslins and silks that would stand on end; he gave her jewels too, and decked her out with chains and trinkets and earrings, till she grew ashamed of her splendour.

By and bye, Willie Black came home from a long voyage, and one of the first to welcome him and invite him to his house was Mr. Toft the shipowner. He had heard all about this little love affair, but he had such confidence in his wife—she was such a jewel, so devoted to him—he was anxious that his rival should see how completely she had forgotten.

'You brought him yourself,' said Alice in her own heart, looking rather hardly at her husband, as he toiled up the steep hill that led to their house, panting and shaking, but refusing to acknowledge that he was tired. 'I had schooled myself to be content, and with your own hand you shattered all my good resolves.'

'Let us stay here for a moment,' said Mr. Toft, 'and admire this pleasant view. O, I'm not tired—no, no—not at all; but see the ship standing out to sea. She's a capital sailer, eh? ah, yes.'

Her sails were spread out far in the distance, rosy with the beams of the setting sun, but a chilly mist was creeping up, and presently the glow vanished and the white sails were blotted out, disappearing in the great vague world of mist and sea and shadow.

'Why, what's the matter, Alice?' said Mr. Toft, turning sharply round. 'Tears! Ah, well, yes, yes, we know—a little hysterical, eh? Don't excite yourself, dearest. My dear poppets, we will walk home very quietly and then we will have tea in our little nest.'

She followed her lord and master slowly up the hill to their home on Look-out-hill: it was a pleasant little villa with a fine garden.

Things went on quietly enough at Look-out-villa for another couple of years. Mrs. Toft had not been blessed by children, as Richard had hoped, and the old man was a good deal crest-fallen thereat; still he lived in hope, and seemed fonder than ever of his young wife. By and bye the rumour went about that he had sent for Lawyer Emlyn to make his will—he had always been very stubborn against making wills; and presently, when Mrs. Emlyn toiled up

Look-out-hill to visit Mrs. Toft—the Emlyns had never visited before at that house—and sometime after invited her to spend a quiet evening in the High-street, everybody shrewdly surmised how the will was made, and judged that the property disposed of was not inconsiderable.

Meantime the Peruvia, the good ship that had sailed away that fine summer's evening, had been heard of more than once. She had not been spoken, however, later than the last October, when she had left Kurachee with the north-east monsoon for the Red Sea, intending to come home by Suez and the Mediterranean. Any day she might return, any day might witness William Black striding up Look-out-hill; any one of the white-winged ships that dotted the horizon might be the one ship that heart-sore Alice was secretly longing to see. He had been very good; he had not written to her sister—she had forbidden him to do so, and he had obeyed her; and yet if he knew how she longed to hear he was safe—after all, it was better not.

Mr. Toft was breaking a little, people said. He was no longer as active as he had been only a short year since. He rarely came down into the town now, and when he did it was pitiable to see him toiling back up the hill, making believe that the ascent was not painful to him. He had been used to come each morning to the reading-room; but now he had given that up, and had the *Times* sent up to him on the next day after publication.

One summer evening—her husband had been poorly all day, and Alice had been constantly occupied in attending to him, but now he had gone off to sleep—she put on her things and went down into the town to make a few purchases, intending to spend half-an-hour with Mrs. Emlyn, to enjoy a gossip with that lively conversible lady.

Down the hill she went, the cool sea-breeze fanning her parched cheeks. The evening was divine, and the sea was stretched before her in long golden swathes, the murmur of it sounding gently in her ears. Ships were stirring; some outward-bound were heaving at their anchors, and the well-remembered sailor's song came softly over the waters; some homeward-bound were making for their anchoring-grounds with full-bellied sails. She strained her eyes, and fancied that now this and now that might be the long-expected Peruvia. But no, there would be no doubt then; her heart would tell her at once, 'That is William's ship!'

The sun was getting low, and she hastened quickly down the hill. She met sundry townspeople she knew by sight, and nodded to them a good-natured greeting; they turned and looked at her, and watched her down the hill. 'How rude people are getting!' she thought. 'There was a time when these would all have touched their hats to the wife of the shipowner.'

At each shop she visited she noticed something strange about

the people. Mr. Meagre, the draper, came out of his little box and stared at her, and Mrs. Meagre's stony visage appeared over the glass door, sternly regarding her. It was the same at the other shops, everybody looked queer.

'Imagination,' she told herself. 'I feel altogether strange, and I find my own feelings reflected in other people's faces. Here comes Mrs. Emlyn.'

Mrs. Emlyn came up to her and looked at her with vacant unrecognising gaze.

'Mrs. Emlyn,' she cried, 'how fortunate I am to meet you!'

The lady gathered together her skirts and passed coldly on.

'O, what have I done—what is the matter?' cried Alice. She felt faint and giddy; something dreadful had happened. The air grew heavy and thick; all the houses in the red, quaint High-street seemed to blink at her; the sky was brassy and dull above her. She was as if in a dream, when the last trumpet seems to sound, and the universe quakes around. But it was nothing; it could be nothing; Mrs. Emlyn was often queer.

But she turned round and made her way home. Her husband was awake and crying for her like a sick child. She could do nothing to-night, but in the morning she would go down into the town and get to the bottom of this mystery, if it were a mystery, and not all a delusion.

Next morning Mr. Toft was better—much better; cheerful and chirrupy. He had his breakfast in bed, however, and Alice took it up to him. He was quite affectionate over his toast, and loving over his egg; and by noon he was down-stairs in the sitting-room grumbling that the *Times* hadn't come.

'It is here now, Richard,' said his wife, bringing him the great broadsheet. She left him to his paper and went on her way about household matters. By and by she heard a strange sound in the parlour, as if somebody had fallen. She ran into the room; Mr. Toft was on the floor in a heap against his easy-chair. He had fallen in a fit; the paper was scrunched up in his hand.

A strange pang shot through her. Grief, remorse, expectation, a flash of hope that would not be repressed. In a moment she was herself again. She laid him gently along the floor, rang the bell violently for assistance, undid his necktie and the front of his shirt, chafed his temples and hands. Servants came, and she sent off for the doctor. She moistened his lips with brandy. He revived.

Strangely he shrank away from her—would not suffer her to touch him; the gardener had come in to help, and, with his assistance, the old man made his way to his bedroom.

Alice was wounded and amazed; but she had heard of sick people suddenly taking fancies against those whom they loved the best. She went to the door to see if the doctor were coming. Mr. Emlyn,

the lawyer, was walking quickly up the hill, a newspaper under l arm. He looked sternly at her as he approached.

'I must see Mr. Toft,' he said, as he reached the door.

'You cannot see him; he is very ill,' said Alice.

The window of Mr. Toft's room was open, and he must hav heard Mr. Emlyn's voice.

'Show Mr. Emlyn up,' he cried, in harsh shrieking tones. 'Come here, sir—come here!'

Mr. Emlyn pushed his way in, and up the staircase; Alice was too frightened to forbid him. The gardener presently came in for pens and ink, took them up to his master, and then waited at the bottom of the stairs.

'You had better go to your work again, Thomas,' said Alice; 'we can manage without you now.'

'Master said I was to stay here.'

She said nothing more, but went into the sitting-room, and waited and watched in dull bewildered expectation. Then she heard Mr. Emlyn's voice:

'Thomas, come up, and bring one of your fellow-servants.'

There was a trampling up-stairs and then down; after that Mr. Emlyn came out of her husband's room; he left the house forthwith without speaking to Alice. Then the doctor came; he too was shown up-stairs. By and by he came down and into the room where Alice was. He took her kindly by the hand.

'My dear Mrs. Toft, prepare yourself for bad news.'

'Is he very ill?' gasped Alice.

'Yes, very ill; nay, he is dead.'

After that the days passed like a dream till the day of the funeral. e wished to follow him to the grave—for he had been very good to , she thought; and now that he was gone her mind misgave her t she had been faithless to him, not in deed, but in heart—but was forbidden by those who had the management of affairs.

A relation of Mr. Toft had turned up, a nephew, a lanky raw-ed youth, with a long neck and a tuft of red hair on his chin; this Ephraim Toft was the chief mourner. Mr. Emlyn also was e funeral; and when they returned they went into the parlour and wine, and afterwards sent for Mrs. Toft to hear the will read. e was a solemn courteous man, this Emlyn, with a full ding voice, and he read out the terms of the will distinctly norously. It was difficult to repress a feeling of elation as he over the list of Mr. Toft's possessions, and ended with the hat left his wife sole legatee and executrix. How, through the f this day, bright vistas of the future gleamed and shone! em! there is a codicil,' said Mr. Emlyn; and bit by bit il undid all that the will had done. The lanky nephew himself and glowered and blinked with amazement and de-

light. There was but one bequest to Alice—a copy of the *Times* of — June, of the day previous to the old man's death.

They left her to herself for a while, and she tried to grasp what all this meant. The lawyer had politely handed to the widow her legacy, the copy of the *Times*. What could it mean?

Ah, yes, it was dreadful, this poverty, after wealth had seemed within her grasp; but still there was youth and hope; and William —yes, she might think of him now fully and freely. She carried no burden of gratitude, she was bound to no respectful memory of the dead; she was free now, and perhaps William was close at hand. Well, she would read this *Times*.

Presently she clasped her hands to her forehead, and, with strained and horror-struck eyes, read this paragraph:

'DERELICT AT SEA.—A pathetic incident is narrated by the master of the steamship Suez, just arrived at Liverpool. It appears that in the Indian Ocean she met with a dismasted vessel apparently abandoned by the crew. A boat was sent to board her, when the following sight met the eyes of the officer. The main and upper decks had been swept clean by the sea, the bulwarks were carried away and every vestige of spars and rigging. No living being was found on board, but in the captain's cabin was the body of a young man with golden hair and beard, much decomposed. A letter was lying on the table, which was brought away by the boat's crew, and we are requested to give it in full, as it may lead to the identification of the ship: "Dearest Alice,—How often have I thought of our last parting, and longed once more to clasp you in my arms! Love like ours is never to be parted, let the sulky old centenarian do as he please. I write to you at your sister's, as you desired me, No. 19 Bold-street, Melford Regis. How well I remember the happy hours we have spent there! I am in command of the ship now." The rest of the letter is illegible, except the words, "Come to me, your loving William Black." The body was sunk in the sea, the vessel left to its fate, and the steamer continued her course.'

That night, as the sun was setting, lighting up with golden flames the broad estuary of Melford, the tide was at its full, and white-winged ships were floating in upon its bosom, a young girl appeared on the farthest extremity of the landing-stage, and poising herself for a moment, and taking a last long look at all the beautiful scene around, cast herself into the waters, which closed around her with a sullen ripple. Once and once again a white arm was seen at the surface; boats put out, and men with ropes shouted and gesticulated from the shore; but it was of no use; the sea claimed its own, and still hoards in its hidden treasury the bones of William and Alice.

F. T.

C. Cattermole, del. W. A. Cr

"THIS NOTCH M[illegible]ORD HE GAVE."

THE NOTCH IN THE BLADE

'WHICH is the sword, grandfather,
You fought with in the wars
So long ago—that time, you know,
You got your hurts and scars?'

'The sword is an evil thing, sweetheart;
It fits not with mine age,
Nor with wither'd palms, that alone for alms
With heaven a strife should wage.'

'Why, this is the one, grandfather—
Now tell me, is it not?'
'Ay, 'twas my sword, but, like its lord,
How rusted it hath got!'

'How heavy it is, grandfather!
I scarce can hold it so.'
'Why, no, my boy, it is not a toy;
It used to be lighter though.'

'See on the edge, grandfather,
What a great notch is here!'
'Better there instead of upon my head;
But it cost the giver dear.'

'Tell us how it was, grandfather,
And who did strike the blow.'
'Well, you'll never cease, and I'll get no peace,
Without the tale, I know.

The Roundheads came one evening
Upon us unaware;
Disarm'd us round, and each one bound
Quite helpless in his chair.

And they sat and ate our supper,
And drank my choicest wine;
And gorged and swill'd, till their hides they fill'd,
Like a loathsome herd of swine.

They'd got them for their leader
A preacher cobbler—knave
That it had happ'd in jail I'd clapp'd,
Because my deer he drave.

And he call'd up all my servants,
    From the steward to the page,
And psalms were screech'd, and at me he preach'd
    Till I nearly burst with rage.

He call'd me a son of Belial,
    He rebuked my pride and sin,
At my table-head; then off to bed
    They march'd us, and lock'd us in.

But they knew not the secret passage;
    And I managed to slip away,
And gather'd my friends from the county's ends
    By the breaking of the day.

We fought them out on the terrace:
    I singled the cobbler out;
He made pretence to be cunning of fence,
    A swordsman keen and stout.

But ere he could recover—
    This notch my sword he gave—
I ran him through, and paid him his due,
    The canting, crop-ear'd knave.

Why, there, I've got quite out of breath—
    You rogue, to stir me thus!—
From battle, murder, and sudden death,
    Good Lord, deliver us!'

ALBERT KING.

THE GREAT CUBAN DIFFICULTY

An Essay ending in Smoke

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

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eems to me but yesterday—so rapidly do the years pass when
re the slaves of Business, and are forced to follow a daily oc-
tion—yet it was in reality ten years ago—even in December
3—that I chanced to be kicking my heels in an antechamber
e Department of State at Washington, in the District of Co-
bia, waiting for an interview with Mr. William H. Seward, the
Premier of President Lincoln, and to whom I had brought
ter of introduction from Mr. Adams, the American Minister in
don. Mr. Seward is dead, and the details of my interview with
really remarkable man are neither here nor there: although I
just hint that he warned me, in the friendliest manner, that,
ever might be the side I took in American politics, and what-
might be the view I adopted of American society, I should
inly be very virulently abused by the American press. I hap-
d to take the wrong side politically: of that fact I am by this
tolerably well convinced; and my Transatlantic friends were
ably unanimous as to my being wrong in a social point of view:
ugh of that fact I am not myself quite so thoroughly per-
ed. At all events, I managed to offend everybody and to please
dy—a happy conjuncture of misfortune which reminds me of
story of the Boston philanthropist, who, shortly before the Civil
broke out, had the temerity to go down South, lecturing against
abominations of slavery. The Southerners caught him; and, as
tural consequence of his capture, he was, after a little prelimi-
cowhiding and railriding, tarred and cottoned; the soft and
y substance growing in the pod of the cotton plant being in
sunny South the substitute for 'the penal plumes'—as Sydney
h in humorous euphuism called the feathers which, in combi-
n with a coating of pitch, make up the ignominious livery of
fender whom the Americans delight to dishonour. Duly tarred
cottoned was the Boston philanthropist; and then he was tied
post in the sun, with the benevolent intent, on the part of his
hern friends, of the flies getting at him and tickling him. In
reat anguish there came up to him a woolly-headed nigger, a
and a bondservant to some gentleman thereabouts. Did this
p tender to him, to slake his raging thirst withal, a gourd full
luted Bourbon, thus improving on the charity extended by

Esmeralda to Quasimodo, when that luckless hunchback was in pillory? Did he say to him, 'Martyr to Liberty's sacred ca interesting but unfortunate missionary from Massachusett's ele State! doubt not, O tarred-and-cottoned Confessor, but that dark-skinned thrall from Afric's burning clime mourns for thy su ings, and will avenge thy wrongs'? Did he do anything in this l Not a bit of it. Will you believe it? This most ungrateful ni doubled his fist; smote the philanthropist on the nose; expe rated disdainfully, and thus bespoke him, 'Dam' Bobolitioni After this, try to do good to your fellow-creatures, and tell how you like it.

They don't make you kick your heels for any lengthened pe in the antechambers of American Cabinet Ministers, and I was s 'through' with my interview with Mr. Seward; but I had been l enough in the waiting-room to study with some attention a ma very large dimensions, varnished and mounted on a roller, hang on the wall. It was that of an island, very mountainous, and w its coasts abundantly indented with bays and creeks. It had b engraved by some Spanish cartographer—at least so I conjectur for in the top right-hand corner there was a formidable achievem of the Royal Arms of Spain—the Crown, the Lion of Castille, Pillars of Hercules, and the arrogant legend, 'Plus Ultra;' wh below, encircled by portentous flourishes, you might read as ran these words: 'Carta Geografica de la Fidelisma Isla de Cu I had then just finished the perusal of Anthony Trollope's *West dies and the Spanish Main*. The echoes of the debates in Cong on the Hundred Million Dollars Bill—a measure proposed under Buchanan's presidency with the view of purchasing and annex Cuba, whether the Spaniards liked it or not—had in 1863 only been drowned by the more thunderous reverberations of the Sec guns firing on Fort Sumter: an outrage which the North *never* gave, and which continued to be throughout the entire war most embittering element; and it was strange how, for many afterwards, the remembrance of that big map at the Secretary State's office kept running in my head, and how I found my mentally muttering, 'Some of these days, the American Eagle knock the most faithful island of Cuba into a Cocked-Hat.'

The collapse may have taken place even before these lines in print. As I write, things only look a little ugly as regards international relations of Spain and the United States; but march of events in these days is rapid. Politicians all seem to striving to keep pace with the lightning swiftness of the elec telegraph; armies no longer go into winter-quarters, but f through every month in the year, and every day in the week (S days included); sovereigns no longer pause in their hostilitie chant *Te Deums*, for everybody seems to be too busy in the Dev

; and diplomacy sings 'patter' songs, rivalling those of the le Mr. Cave in rapidity of utterance, instead of drawling oning and dozing, as of yore. It is quite on the cards (mind, vriting this early in December) that, ere this number of *Bel-* goes to press, the history of the great Anglo-Americano-o-Cuban difficulty may have been written in incessant volleys grams, and in such short-hand fashion as this: 'Refusal of ban Peninsulares to surrender the Virginius:—Massacre of the der of the crew and passengers at Santiago:—Execution of tain General Iorellar by the *garote vil:*—Attack on the Ame-egation at Madrid by the mob:—Heroic defence made by his ency General Sickles, who brains a hundred and fifty of the ners" of the Puerta del Sol with a single blow of his crutch:—ened demonstrations against the British Embassy:—A depu- of *picadores, chulos, banderilleros, capeadores,* and *mata-* wait on the Right Hon. Austen Henry Layard, and saluting ith cries of "*Bravo, Toro!*" vow that no harm shall happen who did so much for the bulls of Nineveh:—Further compli-:—Assassination of Señor Castelar:—Formation of an Intran- Government, with Don Carlos as President, the Duke de ensier Vice-President, Roque Barcia Prime Minister, Mr. ngh Minister of Public Worship, and Admiral Petero of Car- a Minister of Marine:—Departure of the U.S. ironclad on from Key West:—The Peninsulares blow up the Virginius crate of potash to prevent her falling into the hands of the ans:—Bombardment of the Morro Castle:—Investment of as:—Conflagration of Santiago de Cuba:—Revolution at a:—Formation of a Provisional Government composed of Ces- the ghosts of General Lopez and Mr. Filibuster Walker, ñores Cabaña, Carvajal, Partagas, Upmann, José Murias, , Henry Clay, and Carreras of Princes-street, W.C., London: lamation of a Cuban Republic:—Abolition of slavery:— l Butler lands at San Cristobal de la Habana, and seizes the rop and all the stocks of cigars:—George Francis Train ns himself Dictator of the Antilles and is immediately :—Attempt to found a Black Republic, *à la Hayti,* by the and Burgess Minstrels: the attempt fails, owing to Messrs. B. having registered a vow (at Stationers' Hall) never to out of London:—Communism, Atheism, Pantheism, In- ism, Cataclysm:—Final annexation of the Most Faithful to the United States of America.'

ll, and would it be so very astonishing if all these things, or a great proportion of them, were to come to pass? We an age in which *nothing* should astonish us. Ere I have my task, it is probable that even the Tichborne Case may tered into the stage of judicial summing-up. Ten years

ago, weeks would have been consumed in sending warlike ages from Washington to Madrid, and in dispatching pacifi instructions (punctually disobeyed by the Cubans) from Mad Havana. Now Washington, Madrid, and Havana lie at the points of an electric triangle, and communication between eac all of them is a matter of only a few hours. Things have con deed, to the pass predicted by Mrs. Partington (what has b of that old lady?), who in the early days of telegraphy comp that 'you couldn't so much as spank your own child, witho bein' known the very next minit at Jericho!'

It is to be hoped, for the sake of humanity and civilisatio neither Great Britain nor the United States will feel that it cumbent on them to knock either Havana, Matanzas, or Santiag a cocked-hat, and that some means may be devised for exacti surrender of the Virginius, with reparation for the bloody sla of English and American subjects, without resorting to the h argument of big guns and conical shells. Perhaps the most able and, at the same time, the most efficacious way to bri difficulty to a practical solution would be for the combined and American forces to put an execution into the Most F Island, and seize the Cuban 'sticks,' so to speak, retaining p sion until the claims of the plaintiffs had been fully satisfied any case a writ of *fieri facias* is preferable to one of *capias ad faciendum*. There are some organisations capable of bearing mense amount of physical pain (the average Eton boy will freq consent to go to the block in lieu of the young gentleman a doomed to execution, for a *douceur* of half-a-crown): a ma often does not care twopence for what may be done to his but only touch his pocket, and he will howl fearfully. Nor a gentler sex wholly insensible to pecuniary influences. *That* S Pança found out long ago, when he sat in judgment on the B rians. If the Cubans didn't pay out, in meal or in malt, the di levied on their goods and chattels, their property, at the exp of a certain time, could be sold, under the order of the Sh Middlesex, by Messrs. Lumley and Lumley. Nor deem thi posal so fantastical as, at the first blush, it may appear. need be no fear of a return of *nulla bona* to the writ. Ve people on this side the Atlantic have the remotest idea of the mous wealth of the Cubans. I don't mean their 'material reso their coal, iron (which hasn't been got at yet), their coffee, and tobacco. By wealth I mean actual, tangible, glittering money; not in soiled greasy notes of some colonial bank, solid *onzas de oro*,—doubloons, or 'cartwheels,' as irreverent boat captains call them. A Spanish ounce is worth about pounds eighteen shillings; and in Havana an ounce, in th chase of commodities, will go about as far as a sovereign

England. But you call on your banker (who asks you to dinner, of course, and will very probably place his box at the Tacon Theatre at your disposal, and invite you to stop a fortnight at his country house into the bargain)—you call on your banker to draw some cash on your letter of credit; you sign a slip of paper, and he hands you a sack of gold ounces, which a negro boy carries home for you, and then what does the price of commodities matter? I never had so much money in my life—so it seemed to me—as when I was in the Spanish West Indies, although where it originally came from I should be puzzled at this moment, were I called upon to make an affidavit, to tell. I suppose somebody, in the first instance, must have taken out a letter of credit in my favour at a London or New York banking-house. That is the way, I believe, in which the thing is done; but I am sure I don't know. *Quocunque modo, rem.* I had got the *rem* somehow or another in the shape of a sheet of blue foolscap; and I was continually turning it into gold ounces and *pesos fuertes* in the region of the Antilles and the Gulf of Mexico.

Dismissing for the nonce the political aspect of the great Cuban question, about many circumstances of which—the atrocities of the Spaniards having been simply fiendish and revolting—it is difficult to speak with patience, I am nevertheless glad, for more than one reason, which I hope you will deem valid, that Cuba and things Cuban should have come lately so very prominently to the front. At all events public attention will have been called, in this country, to a country of whose condition we have hitherto been in a state of almost entire ignorance. In the last century, and in the earlier years of the present one, English readers were tolerably familiar with the name, at least, of Havana, or 'The Havannah,' as it was called (the real designation of the capital of Cuba is 'San Cristobal de la Habana,' the Spanish 'b,' you will remember, being pronounced 'v'), owing to the fact that, in the reign of the Second and Third Georges, it was found expedient to send British naval expeditions to the island for the purpose of knocking it in a modified manner into the inevitable cocked-hat. Once or twice, if my memory serves me correctly (but I have not Mr. Benjamin Vincent's capital edition of Haydn's *Dictionary of Dates* by me), the 'Pearl of the Antilles' was actually wrested from the Crown of Spain, and swallowed by some grim British admiral or general; but the gem was subsequently disgorged and restored to its rightful owners. As there do not appear to be any rightful owners at all just now to Cuba (seeing that the Spaniards took care to exterminate the indigenous Indian possessors, and neither the Peninsulares nor the Creoles are worthy to own it, and were it given up to the negroes and the Chinese coolies it would speedily degenerate into a kind of black and coffee-coloured chaos like San Domingo—which, I take the leave of impressing on the minds of my brother journalists, is an island comprising not only the

Republic of Hayti, but that of Dominica), the United States mig just as well have the island as anybody else. It would be of good to us. We have, as it is, an island well-nigh as magnificent Cuba, a dependency of the British Crown, by the name of Jamai whose black inhabitants we have idiotically cockered, coddled, a petted until we have rendered them worse than worthless, and who loyal, faithful, and intelligent white people we have so shamefu neglected, maltreated, and snubbed that we have reduced half them to discontent, and the other half to despair. I don't thi that if we annexed Cuba—which we are not in the least likely to —we should know how to deal with it. It would be a black elephan and ten times more costly and more difficult of management th a white one. First, we should send an expensive garrison ther and then, some fine morning, the Colonial Secretary would infor the Anglo-Cubans that they must provide their military defences f themselves; and withdrawing our troops, we should ruin the sho keepers of Havana as we have ruined the shopkeepers of Corfu, a as, but for Canadian shrewdness, energy, and pluck, we should ha ruined the 'Kenuck' storekeepers when we withdrew the Guar and the Rifles from Quebec and Montreal. We should send o some aristocratic idiot, or some impracticable military martinet fitt to govern a convict prison than a colony—and not very fit to gove even convicts—or some dunderheaded bureaucrat out of Whiteha with a penwiper for a heart, and a blotting-pad for a liver, a red-tape for bowels; or else some political adventurer, possib Irish, who had won his proconsulship by making himself intense disagreeable to the Ministry in the House. Then we should impo heavy cargoes of the *odium theologicum*, in full working order, a ready for immediate use. The Catholic and Protestant bishops a clergymen would all be at it speedily hammer and tongs; then black band of Baptists would rush over from Jamaica, and fly the throat of the Jesuits, who have done an immensity of educ tional good in Cuba. Subsequently, you may rest assured, the lo lean finger of Exeter Hall would be thrust into the Cuban pie; t British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society would get up agonisi petitions to Parliament, complaining of the atrocious tyranny of t Cuban planters in asking the negro and Chinese labourers to p rent for the cottages they occupied, and declining to pay them wag when they refused to work. Then the blacks and the Chinese wou revolt, and we should hang them by the score, and flog them by t hundred; and then Mr. Edward Jenkins would publish a pamphl entitled 'Ginx's Last Baby; or Cuba, and what shall we do wi it?' and the miserable drama of colonial meddling, muddling, mi sionary-mongering, and wholesale murder in the interests of Tr Philanthropy would have been played out for the five hundred time.

I desire with all my heart to see the Americans comfortably and permanently settled in the occupation of Cuba; and I have no doubt that they will be able to 'run' it as successfully as they have run the whilom French colonies of Vermont and Louisiana, and the whilom Spanish colonies of Florida, Texas, and California. It does not in the least matter to a man whom Uncle Sam has dazzled with his stars or coerced with his stripes what may be the language he speaks, or what may have been the political institutions under which he has formerly lived. He has got to be an American citizen, to help to govern his own State, to send representatives to Congress, and to obey the fundamentals of the constitution. That is emphatically 'what is for supper;' and that the erst quasi-Mexican 'greaser' of California and the effete Creole of New Orleans discovered with commendable despatch, long ago. All nationalities can live side by side in tolerable amity with Anglo-Americans, save and excepting only the Indians. Between the Yankee and the Red Man there seems to be an antagonism and an antipathy not to be eradicated, and scarcely to be modified by any conciliatory action on the part of the dominant and more civilised race. The Yankee humorist was uttering a philosophic truth when, in seemingly careless buffoonery, he remarked that 'Injuns was pison.' So, to the Americans at least, the Redskins always have been, always are, and always will be, until the last brave, the last squaw, and the last papoose are furnished with a free pass to the Happy Hunting-grounds. Fortunately there are no Indians left in Cuba; for it would be a spectacle repulsive to humanity to watch the remarkably expeditious process of grinding and stamping out the vitals of the unhappy person with the copper-coloured skin to which the annexing American, in the accomplishment of his 'manifest destiny,' would be fain to resort. Until within a very recent period it was held, and by persons, too, apparently well qualified to judge of the matter, that the enfranchised African would experience, equally with the Indian, insuperable difficulties in dwelling side by side with his former proprietor of white blood. Judging from the frightful example of Jamaica and other West-Indian colonies, it was argued that Quashee, so long as he could procure 'abundant pumpkins,' would not work, and that he would 'die out.' The experience of manumission in the Southern States of the Union seems somewhat to tend to the conclusion that the negro will work without the persuasion of a cowhide perpetually flourished over his back; and it looks as though Sambo, even in his most degraded state of bondage, had imbibed something of the 'cuteness' and business faculty of his master. That vast numbers of black people died, from neglect or from disease, in the days immediately following President Lincoln's proclamation is probable enough; and that there are still plenty of idle, worthless, loafing negroes down South, too lazy to do a couple of days' work out of the seven, is still more probable; but in the main the case seems

to stand thus: that Sambo is passionately fond, not only of pumpki squash, and an abundance thereof, but of hog and hominy* and lag beer, and that wherever the American has rule the negro cann obtain those delicacies without working for them. If he won't work th American will 'run him out,'—that is to say, he will starve him t death; and that is a mode of dissolution to which Sambo has rooted objection.

With the Chinese coolies who abound in Cuba—some occupi as field hands in the plantations, and others working as mechani in the towns, and capital mechanics they make—the Americans migl have just as much but no more trouble than they have had with tl Celestials in California. We have all laughed over Bret Harte poem of the 'Heathen Chinee,' and we are tolerably aware that tl people with the pigtails are usually very nasty fellows, consumma cheats, and piggishly obstinate in their Conservatism from a Chine point of view; and it is notorious that from time to time the arises among the white Californians (especially among the Irish) fierce outcry against 'Chinese cheap labour,' which sometimes r sults in the state and municipal governments harrying and worryin the emigrants from the Flowery Land in a manner at once unju and unkind. At the same time the Californians are well aware th John Chinaman is always very useful, and often a very ingenious a well-nigh accomplished personage—that he makes a capital washe man, tailor, barber, staymaker, waiter, clerk, and photograph manipulator; and that if he would only abstain from eating such nas messes, if he would only profess some kind of rational faith, and he would only bring over Mrs. John Chinaman with him, and tra up the little Chinese to learn the Declaration of Independence an the Shorter Catechism, he would be susceptible of being turned, time, into a very good citizen. In Cuba, however, the America will find a coolie quite as ingenious and much more practicable th the sample of the article visible in the Golden State. The Cub Chinaman, when he is a dweller in the towns, rarely refuses to c off his pigtail, and let his black locks grow in the natural manner; a in many cases I have known him cheerfully to submit to the rite baptism, and forego his heathen creed and appellation for a Christi name and Christian ways.

* The fondness of the negro for food consisting of pulse or of Indian corn w seldom more amusingly illustrated than in a case of which I once read as occurri at the Thames police-court. A negro sailor, belonging to some ship lying in t London Docks, was summoned by his captain for refusing to work. The neg who owned to the high-sounding name of Napoleon Bonaparte, pleaded that was badly fed on board; to which the skipper replied, that he and the rest of t crew had plenty of roast beef and vegetables for dinner every day. 'Well, Napoleon Bonaparte,' said the magistrate, 'what have you to say to the charg 'Um no want rob beef an' wegditummles,' indignantly replied the namesake of t Corsican usurper, '*um want pea-soup to blow um belly out.*'

Another, and to my mind a very important, advantage will accrue to the cause of civilisation from the annexation of Cuba to the States, in the certainty that the Americans will not be six months in possession of the island before they build a series of monster hotels, fitted with every European comfort and accommodation, at Havana, at Matanzas, and at Santiago—to say nothing of the towns in the interior. I do not forget that ten years have elapsed since I visited La Fidelisma Isla, and that the more recent experiences of Mr. Antonio Gallenga and Mr. Walter Goodman (both of whom have recently and opportunely published excellent narratives of their travels and adventures in Cuba) may show that considerable improvement has taken place in the hotel arrangements there since 1863. Such improvement, I should say, has most notably taken place at Havana itself since the old walls of circumvallation were pulled down; but all I can say, from personal remembrance of suffering, is that when I sojourned at the sign of the Pearl of the Antilles I was boarded and lodged considerably worse than an Irish pig, and was charged for my board and lodging considerably more than an English duke in an English hotel of the first class would be. I think I had once something to say on this subject in an article in a series of papers called 'The Streets of the World,' and in connection with a Havanero hotel called 'El Globo,' in the Calle del Obispo.

There is only one thing that dashes with bitterness my joyful anticipations as to the successful manner in which our Transatlantic cousins will 'run' La Fidelisma Isla, and that is the almost certainty—first, that the Americans will themselves smoke all the best cigars to be found in the existing stocks; and next, that they will considerably raise the export duty on tobacco. Superior cigars are dear enough as it is, goodness knows, and with an additional tax levied on them before they leave Cuba, they must rise ere long in England to famine prices.

Just as *Belgravia* is going to press, we learn that the Spaniards have 'caved in,' and that there is to be no knocking of Cuba into a cocked-hat, this time. But the operation will have to be performed, physically or morally, ere long, depend upon it.

SINGLE LIFE

When expressing a conviction that in marriage lies the possibility of the highest happiness, the fullest excellence, the greatest usefulness, and the truest dignity for mankind, and that it presents the best and noblest phase of social life, I feel quite sure that I carry with me the warm sympathy and hearty acquiescence of all wise and good men and women; but when to this confession of faith I append the announcement of a farther conviction, that though a well-ordered marriage is best and first, a well-ordered single life is very good and a close second, I may doubt whether the sympathy and acquiescence will be either so hearty or general. Nevertheless, believing as I do that a wrong estimate of the relative worth and dignity of married and single life is the source of much social harm and personal deterioration, I will not shrink from the perhaps ungrateful task of vindicating, and to the best of my ability justifying, my conviction that single life is infinitely preferable to any but a well-assorted marriage; for this reason, if for no other, that such possibilities as lie in the former may, at his or her pleasure, be developed by each single man or woman; whereas those of marriage must, to a great extent, remain in abeyance when either party fails in such coöperation as is utterly impossible where principles, aims, wishes, and tastes are antagonistic. And be it remembered that these must be not only accordant, but good; or marriage will most surely, through reciprocally accordant action, but intensify personal evil, and extend in society the baneful influence of a low tone and standard, moral or intellectual.

I shall confine myself in great measure to the consideration of women's single life, because we have so long been accustomed to hear it bewailed as the direst calamity which can befall womanhood. The wise and good who can recognise clearly, and do justly appreciate, the rare excellence which distinguishes many single women do so with extra fervour, because they imagine this excellence to have been attained under conditions of exceptional difficulty or through exceptionally painful discipline; whilst for men single life has generally been considered free and pleasant, though not perhaps morally very advantageous, lacking as it does the sharp discipline not very flatteringly supposed to result from, and to be peculiar to, marriage, and through its exemption from the cares and sacrifices which, it seems to be taken for granted, are entailed on men exclusively by marriage.

Now it has ever been my opinion that good men are far more dependent on marriage for happiness than good women are, and that the idea of men's special self-sacrifice in marriage is an erroneous one; and I can perceive no reason for the censure so generally cast upon those men who, by choosing to remain unmarried, increase the numbers of women who must remain single. The education and training of women are wisely directed towards such a development of their faculties as will best qualify them to find as well as to give happiness in the sphere of domestic life, because to that sphere marriage in great measure confines them; and marriage, which is a probability for all, is a certainty for the immense majority of women. Therefore, single women being thus qualified have a great advantage over single men, from whose education so much of that on which the comfort of domestic life depends has been excluded. The relative numbers of the sexes have surely been most wisely and beneficently ordered, since the greater number of women assures pretty certainly to men the possibility of a happy marriage, which might be less certain, and more difficult of attainment, if the sexes had been numerically equal, especially when women shall have recognised the fact, that the conventional estimate of the advantages derived from marriage by men and women respectively is not a correct one.

It is owing to the relative over-estimate of the advantages of a married woman's lot that single women make so little and get so little out of their lives. Having too readily accepted the dictum that 'man's love is of man's life a part,' and that ''tis woman's whole existence,' they accept with meekness or with bitterness, as individual character prompts, the position accorded to them as 'failures' and anomalies; they seem often to go through life thoroughly ashamed of themselves, and live, so to speak, in a chronic state of apology for, or protest against, the fact of their own existence. It has been deemed a great amelioration of their fate that they are occasionally permitted by a married friend to take a humble share in her life, and to have accorded to them by her a not inconsiderable part of the labours, cares, and worries of marriage. The married woman usually feeling herself quite equal to the enjoyment of the pleasures and advantages of her position, in these her single friends are not often required to participate; nay, they are not unfrequently called upon to undertake the former in order that she may more fully and comfortably enjoy the latter; for a conscientious woman will feel the consciousness of neglected duties, however unpleasant they may be, is apt to spoil the flavour and hinder the full enjoyment of her pleasures.

Now what would be the result of a discovery that the ground on which the theory of a single woman's life has been built is simply a mistake; that love is no more a woman's 'whole existence' than it is a man's; that when she fails in that 'part' of her life, as little

as when a man so fails is life closed to either; that in neither is personal and social annihilation a necessary result of the fail that there is as little need for her to become a mere parasite adjunct to another's life as there is for him to become such? us all awake to the facts that existence is as full of persona terests, and may be made to yield as keen enjoyment, to single men as to single men; that the fields of literature, science, an are open to both alike, both being, by reason of their single es at leisure and at liberty to cultivate them to the utmost that faculties permit; that the earth is still beautiful for both alike; that for both there is abundant and honourable work to be quite irrespective of the peculiar tasks which their married fri have undertaken. The religious aims and duties of life, it scarcely be remarked, are common to all men and women, wh married or single. The personal duty of each individual hu being to become a good man or woman takes precedence o relative duties, and is of imperative obligation; whilst many o latter, and notably that of becoming a good husband or wife optional. Taking lower ground, we maintain that a single wo has as much right to set before herself her own comfort, plea and happiness, as her aims in life, as any man, married or si has a right to do likewise; and as her talents and tastes may di she may, without justly incurring the blame (always so readily on single women) of selfishness, find for herself congenial purs The garden, the needle, light literature, &c., are as lawful an great pleasures to many women as their innocent hobbies a many men whose mental endowments do not qualify them for, whose tastes do not lead them into, the higher walks of life.

Women will do well to make an accurate estimate of the p bilities of single life. Let but an appreciable number of them cognise and avow the fact that it has its own advantages and joyments, and that these are at least as great for them as the for men, and there will very soon be an end of the superiority ventionally ascribed to married women. Let us try to realise possible life of a cultivated, sensible, and amiable single wo especially of one in the upper middle class; if such a woman po but a small income, she can, if she will, get a great deal out o life. I do not at present speak of those unhappy women, nume in this as in other classes, who in their conduct and by their racter give point to the jibes and sarcastic pity freely bestowe 'old maids.' These are certainly to be censured, but ought to be very kindly pitied; for they have only been (as the great jority of mankind have always been) not strong enough to domi their environments, not in advance of the spirit of their t Themselves utterly conventional, they have accepted without q tion the conventional estimate of married and single life; their y

has probably passed in perpetually frustrated, and finally unsuccessful, attempts to establish themselves as married women. I do not suppose that any women pass through life without some opportunity to marry; but seeking, as do the women to whom I refer, only the conventionally valued advantages of marriage, position, wealth, &c., their failure to attract men able to bestow these advantages is very generally the reason of their remaining single.

It must be confessed that some single women of this class do become very odious. Turning, not upon the men who have neglected, but upon the women who have supplanted, them, they seem, indeed, to have cast off all reverence for their own womanhood; they hate, and would fain not perceive any dignity in wifehood, any excellence in motherhood, any charm in girlhood; they greedily learn and pitilessly expose the sins and follies of their own sex; and affect to scorn, as mere trickery, all womanly truth, tenderness, and delicacy, and reserve their worthless respect and damaging approbation only for those who participate alike in their failure and in their rancour. But the very great majority who have failed to achieve 'a good establishment' are very different. All that is wanting for them is just a little more strength of mind, just a little clearer vision through the conventional into the real. If they could but perceive that failure as to one of the aims of life is a very different thing from its total wreck—if they would but make an accurate estimate of its remaining possibilities—we should hear from the world at large much less nonsense about 'the waste of feelings unemployed,' about the ungathered rose placed in no man's bosom, &c. In their own dainty feminine ways and pursuits; in their freedom, in their leisure; in the tranquil refinement with which even a small income enables them to invest their lives; in the absence of the interruptions, the worries, the cares, the many sorrows, and the bitter disappointments of married life; and in their cosy womanly friendships,—single women may find such pleasant happiness as can be surpassed only in the most fortunate marriages, and which far surpasses that attained by the majority of their married sisters.

Society is open alike to married and single persons, whether men or women, just so far as their means enable them to enjoy its pleasures and to share its obligations.

In conclusion, it may not be amiss to ascertain, if we can, how this low estimate of single life has so generally obtained. It will not do to charge it entirely on 'tyrant man,' though it certainly is advantageous to him; women are probably quite as much as he responsible for it. It rests, first, on the truth that exceeding and supreme happiness springs from a well-assorted marriage; and secondly, on the fallacy that, with few exceptions, all marriages yield this happiness. And this fallacy owes its being and its influence to another conventionalism, that which generally and very cruelly

charges upon women the blame of unhappy marriages, and under the influence of which an unhappy married woman is scarcely deemed respectable. Besides this, a strictly personal and very pathetic consideration induces many women to exalt married at the expense of single life. Very few of them marry without a pretty assured conviction, entertained by each on her own behalf, that the matrimonial lot drawn by herself is a prize; and the happy winner has not hesitated to avow her conviction, with, it may be, the expression of some scorn or pity for the single estate from which even the chance of a similar prize is excluded. And when the disillusion comes, the disappointment which she hides within her own bosom is hard enough to bear without any addition of outward mortification; and so is reproduced in many a married life the Spartan story of the Boy and the Fox, or the more homely fabulous legend of the Fox who had lost his Tail.

RIGHTED AT LAST

BY MRS. PRICE, AUTHOR OF 'THE CLERK'S DAUGHTER,' ETC.

CHAPTER I. THE LOCUM TENENS.

ONE lovely summer night, a few years ago, an old-fashioned little vehicle was being dragged up a steep ascent among the Cotswold Hills, by a sturdy little pony, who stopped every now and then of his own accord, as though perfectly well aware of how many 'rises and dips' lay before him, and of the consequent necessity of not losing his wind by over-exertion at this stage of his journey. The two men who were walking on either side of the four-wheeler occupied these moments of rest, the one in cheering and patting the pony, the other in gazing round upon what was to him altogether an unfamiliar scene. Long sloping meadows, on one side, parted from each other by low stone walls, a few cottages—stone too, even the roofs—dotted here and there, a long way off a tall cathedral spire, and over all the rapidly gathering gray shadows of coming night; and on the other side, high jagged yellow cliffs, crowned by tier after tier of mighty trees, whose topmost boughs caught the last golden light of the setting sun beyond, whose friendly branches sheltered myriads of song-birds.

'What a glorious view we shall get yonder!' cried the stranger, pointing to a turn on the hillside, to be reached after another stiff ascent of half a mile.

'Ay, sir,' responded the man, 'they do say as the look-out there is as good as any in the country—or out of it either, *I* should think. Master, he say to me when I were a-drivin' him down here the last time the other day, "Jim," says he, "it's my belief I sha'n't see nothin' finer in the way of wiews in all my travels than this here Cat's-back, and that there Nest by the beck;" and he's a travelled man, is master, and knows what he's a-sayin' of too.'

These last words were flung out a little defiantly, as if to warn the young man who was coming as *locum tenens* to Maybeck, that though for a twelvemonth or so he might be invested with the invalid-rector's power, and preach in his pulpit, and live in his house, and look after his flock, still he had better take care and not let his pride at such a position run away with him, and especially he had better not set up an opinion in opposition to 'master's.'

But Godfrey Bree was noways inclined to gainsay his conductor's hearty praise; instead of so doing, he so unaffectedly showed a delight in the fair views that lay round about them at every turn,

that by the time Maybeck rectory was reached, he had won golden opinions of 'Jim,' who informed his wife that night over their supper, 'that whatsoever the new man might be, papish or chapel disposed, he knowed a nice sight when he see it, and that spoke in his favour!'

A quiet lonely meal, some few minutes' study of the room where it was served, an introduction to and commencement of a warm friendship with Flops, the old rector's spaniel, and then the curate strolled out into the garden possessed with the half-satisfied, half restless feelings that attend so many changes of men's lives. This was his first parochial charge,—the eight years of his life since he had left college having been passed in the very different work of teaching in a grammar-school,—and how different it all seemed! There, in the busy town of many thousands, with a throng of lads about him from morning till night, plenty of people glad to see him when he could steal an hour from his work, he had hardly known what it was to have a minute to himself; the noise of streets and many voices was about him at all hours; every moment of every day found him with plenty to do. Here, as yet, he knew no one; he had come to this little quiet spot mainly for the sake of rest from overwork—and rest, even to stagnation, he seemed likely to get. He knew no one; indeed, according to Jim's account, there were not many folks to know; a poor population of under a hundred to attend to, three 'gentlefolks' houses' to call at—inhabited by a retired officer of the army, the squire of the place, and a certain Mr. Darlington, of whom nobody knew much: these constituted his parish, and constituted for him something very like solitude.

So at least Godfrey Bree thought that first night, and wondered how ever he should tide over his twelvemonth's charge, how he should bear the monotony of life in this out-of-the-world hamlet. All alone: the stillness was oppressive, and irritated him into action of some sort; he opened the gate, and set off walking briskly down hill, intending by the clear light of the midsummer moon to explore a mile or two of country before he went to rest. His rapid steps were stayed, as he was going swiftly round a broken bit of road, by the shrill voice of a woman calling after him:

'Be you our new minister, sir? Then mind please where you're goin' of. That path'll take you right down to the quarry, and maybe you'll get a fall before you know where you are. I ask your pardon for stoppin' you, but not knowin' your ways you'd best to go careful.'

He thanked the woman and 'went careful,' to where the path wound among rough stones and thick-growing brambles by the very edge of a large stone quarry, so steep and jagged that he scarcely cared to look down twice, and very sensibly resolved to retrace his steps, and postpone farther wanderings till daylight. On his way back he saw a pretty picture, and under the shadow of a sweet-scented lime stayed some moments gazing at it. A little back

om the road, parted from it by a low hedge, stood one of the three gentlefolks' houses,' a long window was wide open, a lamp lighted ithin, a background of many flowers, and a girl with yellow hair, eated in the full light, resting her face upon her hand as she read loud to some hearer unseen. The curate was near enough to catch he sound of a sweet clear voice, and loitered with a passing wish or a full sight of the fair face—may his loneliness excuse his intrusive glances!—but at that moment up rushed Flops, hot from the llegal pursuit of a rabbit, and with a joyful bark the ill-mannered dog rushed straight in at the open window and made herself very much at home by jumping with her dew-damped paws on the reader's light summer dress. Scarcely knowing whether to retreat or advance, he hesitated a moment, and then had no choice but to go forward; for the girl came out upon the lawn, and catching sight of his figure beneath the limes, cried out:

'O James, here is this dog of yours again! Please take her home, and keep her safe. I like to have her; but papa— I—I beg your pardon,' as the curate drew near; 'I thought I was speaking to the servant from the rectory.'

In great confusion and awkwardness, Godfrey Bree made his apologies and explained who he was, mentally chafing at the accident which brought him forward in such a mal-apropos manner. But the look he ventured at the young lady nearly repaid him for all his annoyance. The face was worthy of the voice—sweet and grave and womanly beyond even his ideal; and her manner, gentle and self-possessed, well matched her face.

He could have gone on explaining and apologising for an hour, but a sharp voice from the house called 'Emily!' and handing the intruding Flops over to the curate's keeping, the girl hurried back to her father, and the young man retraced his steps to the rectory. On the whole, it seemed to him, however, that Maybeck was a far more habitable place than he had thought it to be an hour ago.

Chapter II.

THE INEVITABLE DILEMMA.

A HABITABLE, cheery, sociable little place the village was in truth, in spite of the smallness of its population, which seemed rather ridiculous when first faced by this stray man from a busy town; and before a week was over Godfrey Bree had made so much use of his time that he had seen the inside of most of the cottages, and learnt from the lips of their feminine occupiers such budgets of domestic trials, such perplexing confidences of family histories, such volumes of details concerning all the children of every household, as set him often wondering what in the world men with large parishes could do if they had a proportionate increase of matters to listen to.

But that was only his first week, before he knew how to manage properly; after a while he contrived to avoid such floods of gossip, and yet maintain his character as a kindly listener and good adviser.

He made his call, too, at the squire's, and saw the whole family—master, mistress, and four fat daughters, two like the father, two like the mother—all ready to welcome a young and gentlemanly man as a pleasant temporary change in place of the old invalid clergyman. The squire found out that the new-comer's politics were all right—that is, something the same kind as his own—and, accepting him at once as the right kind of man, showed him his pictures, his kennels, and his favourite hunter, and asked his advice upon a much vexed question of a footpath across the park; finishing up with a hearty invitation to come in to lunch or dinner whenever he felt disposed to do so.

And he called at the retired officer's, and listened with patience while his ill-used host set plainly before him how infamously he and his claims had been slighted and insulted by a Radical Government.

'By Jove, sir,' cried the wounded major (wounded in spirit, *I* mean),—'by Jove, if I hadn't had the spirit of a lamb—if I hadn't been brought up to understand the—the duty of moderating your feelings when you are in the very devil of a temper—I beg your pardon, Mr. Bree, I do indeed!—and if I hadn't felt it was altogether beneath me to take notice of such a blackguardly conspiracy, I should have shaken the service off in disgust and thrown up my commission, and sent the Commander-in-Chief a letter that would have made his ears tingle. Upon my word I should, sir! But I remembered—my late father was a clergyman—I remembered it is not always wise to get in a rage and do what you wish. A Christian and an officer has other duties. So I waited till I cooled down, and then sold my commission.'

The major wound up as the squire had done, by begging this excellent new listener to drop in at six o'clock whenever he wished for a homely dinner, and some one else's company besides his own.

Lastly, he made his visit to Mr. Darlington's, postponing his call there from day to day for reasons scarcely intelligible to himself.

He was ushered into the same bright room of which he had caught a glimpse a week before, met and welcomed by Miss Darlington herself, whose delicate beauty gained, as so many kinds of beauty do *not*, by being seen in broad daylight. A lovely complexion, clear large gray eyes that smiled as brightly as her lips, a perfect figure, and a soft sweet voice. She needed no adjuncts of dress or personal adornment to enhance her many charms; and either she was aware this, or had other reasons for the noticeable simplicity of her attire, which seemed scarcely in keeping with the costliness of the furniture and ornaments of the room in which she was seated. At first

the curate, who was thoroughly unaccustomed to ladies' society, was puzzled to know in what other particular, besides her charming face, she differed so much from most others of her sex; but after a few visits at the Hall had brought before his eyes a considerable display of west-country fashionable attire, he became aware of Miss Darlington's peculiarity, and set it down in his own mind as a piece of very pardonable vanity—an error, if error at all, in the right direction.

The first few minutes of that morning's call led the young man into an unknown land, where hitherto his steps had never strayed. I don't mean that he fell headlong in love all in one brief half hour, or even for weeks suspected that he was in danger of doing so at all; but dreams and longings for a home of his own henceforth troubled him as they had never done before; a weariness and distaste of his old life came over him, and he began to think he never could go back to the pursuits and work he had been so loth to leave.

One more trifling circumstance struck him during that first interview—for he naturally paid more heed to manner than to dress—and noticed a slight but certain change in Miss Darlington's manner from the moment her father entered the room.

The latter received Mr. Bree with all possible courtesy, and detained him for nearly an hour in friendly conversation, explaining, rather unnecessarily, his own reasons for living in such a secluded part of the country; 'natural indolence, I must confess, and a genuine dislike to being elbowed about in the world;' then, gauging his visitor's tastes and knowledge of matters, artistic, political, and social, rapidly and skilfully, he ended by congratulating himself on having a neighbour with so many similar tastes to his own, and expressing a hope that they might see much of each other.

But during that hour Miss Darlington scarcely spoke, and when Godfrey Bree looked towards her he fancied a shadow had come over her face—an anxious, slightly distressed look for which he could not account, which changed her curiously, making her look grave and older than her years.

And as it was that morning, so it was ever afterwards. Apart from her father the curate always found her bright and cheerful, though perhaps less given to mirth than most girls of twenty; but with Mr. Darlington always subdued, always quiet; watching him with eager anticipation of his wishes or wants; reading when she was bidden—he would have her read aloud for hours some days; singing to him if he was so disposed; his constant companion in walks or drives; his devoted attendant during those hours when he was ill or fancied himself to be so; and yet no one who watched her—as the curate soon delighted in doing—could fail to perceive that there was some false note in the harmony of that household, some slight invisible barrier between the love of this father and daughter.

Meanwhile, as his acquaintance with the Darlingtons grew

closer, the weeks were creeping on. The harvest was gathered-in far and near, and the woods down the steep hill-sides were glorious in red and golden garments.

Letters from abroad told Godfrey Bree that Mr. Herbert, the rector, was slowly but surely regaining his health, and trusted to be able to resume his parish work during the following summer; 'and that means,' thought Godfrey ruefully, 'that I shall be wanted here no longer.' That day the curate first faced a very awkward question: 'Would Mr. Darlington, with all his seeming friendliness, be disposed to give up his daughter to a man who had no better prospect for years to come than a curacy, or possibly a country grammar-school—who had no prospect, moreover, of ever inheriting more than the solitary thousand pounds he already possessed?'

The poor fellow took himself to task for his folly; but it was late in the day to do that. Then he told himself he must see and master this quick-growing passion—which only shows how ignorant he was on such matters; and then, as if the very Fates fought against him, Mr. Darlington met with some slight accident which kept him within doors, and he was constantly sending for the curate to dine or lunch with him 'out of pity.' So the chains were riveted faster than ever as winter drew on apace.

Chapter III.

IN WORSE CONFUSION.

One November afternoon an urgent message had gone across to the rectory for Mr. Bree to dine at the White House; so Mr. Darlington's cottage was called.

Mr. Bree had declined to go, half glad to be out of danger's way for once—'his lads were coming up to the night school, and he should be busy till eight o'clock.' Upon which came another message that Mr. Darlington would put off dining till eight if Mr. Bree would go then. So the over-persuaded curate gave in, and went something against his will.

Against his will for two reasons. First, he was afraid of his secret escaping from him before he had well made up his mind what course he ought to take; and next, because his more frequent interviews with Mr. Darlington had not strengthened his liking for that gentleman. At times such flashes of bitterness broke from him, such rough harsh speeches, as made one wonder what in the world was out of joint with this man, who lived to all seeming in such wealth and comfort; and after such speeches, if they had happened at dinner, it was certain Mr. Darlington attempted to raise his spirits by drinking freely of the wines which he used to boast were among the best in the country.

On this November evening Godfrey could see, the moment he

entered the dining-room, that his host was in no particularly happy frame of mind.

He received his guest, however, with many expressions of welcome, and vented his ill-temper on the dinner, which he declared had been spoiled in the cooking; then, as though ashamed of so much fault-finding, he turned the conversation to descriptions of the Lake country, which he knew well, and of which he spoke with such happy fluency, that it was difficult to believe him to be the same man who had sat grumbling at the head of his table a few minutes before.

Having achieved this point he suddenly subsided, and playing listlessly with a wine-glass, begged to know whether Mr. Bree had discovered any wonderful genius among the clodhoppers he was teaching, or what made the occupation so particularly engrossing.

The young man coloured at the sneering tone, but answered with perfect good temper, that his pupils were none of them very apt; but that he conceived it to be his duty to help them if they wished to learn.

'Well, every one to his taste,' said Mr. Darlington coldly. 'I suppose you are something like myself at times, driven to seek uncongenial companions rather than none at all, in such a dismal corner of the earth as this is—dismal, that is, when the fishing season is over,' he added hurriedly, and flushing slightly.

Uncertain how to take such a speech, the curate was for answering hotly; but at that instant he caught Emily Darlington's glance, frightened and entreating. The appeal from her was a delight to him, and for her sake he answered courteously:

'Indeed, you would be surprised if you knew how much one gets interested in such unpromising pupils. I know the people here so well now, that Maybeck seems to me one of the most important spots of the earth, though I don't happen to care for trout-fishing. No, thank you, no more wine.'

'Happy you, if you can make yourself contented,' responded his host; 'to me it appears as though such drudgery as your evening's work must be awfully uncongenial to a man like yourself, accustomed to something better—though in the same line!'—this with another sneer.

('O Emily,' thought the curate, 'if that man were any one but your father, I should not wait at his table to hear another such speech!')

'Teaching is "my line," as you say,' he answered; 'and I like it heartily. Perhaps you will excuse me for saying that I consider it as much my duty to teach the lads about here what little they are anxious to learn, as I should consider it my duty to fulfil any other trust committed to me honestly and fairly.'

'Bah! *trust!*' muttered Mr. Darlington, and again the curate caught the daughter's eye, glancing nervously towards him, as

though imploring a change of conversation. So striking farther afield for a subject, he went on:

'I had a pupil once, five or six years ago, for whose sake I used often to wish myself a rich man, so that I could have pushed him on in the world. For so young a boy, he promised wonderfully well, and many a plan we made to work him up and get him through Oxford or Cambridge. But it all came to nothing; downright poverty forced his mother to take him from school; somehow a berth was found for him in a ship that traded between here and China—he hated the sea, poor little chap! And the other day I took up a stray newspaper for a minute, and the first thing I saw was that the Queen had gone down in the Chinese seas with poor Charlie Merlin and every other soul on board.'

'Charlie!'—it was Miss Darlington began speaking. Her father interrupted her harshly:

'Ring the bell! I—this glass is snapped,' and he pushed the broken glass away. 'You need not remain, Emily, we shall be in the drawing-room presently;' but his voice as he spoke was unsteady, and his hand shook terribly as he poured out more wine.

Miss Darlington hurried from the room without a word; but as Godfrey held the door open for her, he could see that her face was white, and her eyes full of tears.

Scarcely knowing whether to connect her evident distress with what he had been saying, he felt perplexed as to what to do when he resumed his seat; but after two or three minutes' dead silence Mr. Darlington asked slowly:

'What was the name of the boy you just spoke of?'

'Charlie Elwin Merlin.'

'And he lived—?'

'At Newby by York.'

'O!' Then still more slowly: 'At Newby by York; a place I have never seen. I thought you were an eastern counties' man—that you had lived all your life at St. Osyth's?'

'Not quite all. I have many relations in Yorkshire—my only living relatives, cousins, are all in different parts of that county. After Christmas I mean to have a holiday, and run up to see them for ten days.'

'O, and then you will see this Mr.— these people who interest you?'

'Perhaps I shall,' said the curate sadly; and then he got up and said he would be going home, for he did not care to anticipate or discuss so sad a meeting as his would be with that sorrowing mother. He was vexed with himself for so carelessly introducing the subject; and so, resisting Mr. Darlington's invitation to remain longer, he went off to bid Miss Darlington good-night in the drawing-room at once.

She was not there; but half a dozen candles were flaring in a strong draught, the dark curtains were pulled aside, and the window stood wide open. While he hesitated, a voice without said:

'Mr. Bree, is papa coming? What, are you going already?' Then she stepped in with a dark shawl gathered about her head and shoulders; but though she closed the window, she kept well within the shadow of the curtains, holding up one hand to shield her eyes, as though the light dazzled her.

'Wait one moment,' she said softly, as he offered to bid her good-night; then going on rapidly, a deep flush replacing her unusual pallor: 'Will you forgive me, Mr. Bree; but will you—may I give you something for that poor lady you spoke of? Perhaps, if—if she has other children she will want it now. O, no; pray do not think it any liberality, papa gives me so much more than I ever use.' The last words broke into something very like a sob. 'Please go,' she whispered; 'and pray do not name who sent this.'

He could but go, more puzzled than ever by the evening visit. 'This' he found on examination to be a bank note for fifty pounds.

Chapter IV.

PRUDENCE GOES TO THE WINDS.

Over and over again did the curate ponder the strange circumstances of his last visit to the White Cottage—last it seemed likely to be, for no invitation to go again reached him between that night and Christmas, and wearily the time dragged along, each day opening on the hope that he might meet Miss Darlington once more, and closing with a regret that that one object was still unachieved. Among his poor folks he often heard her named, and by the many gifts that were shown to him, it seemed as though she must have shut herself up to work for her neighbours. One day an old paralysed woman, whose home Emily had often brightened by her presence, told the curate 'that her young lady was a-goin' right away; she come last night and told her so herself; and, O, how she should miss her, that she should!' and then the poor old creature shed ready tears, and pitied herself for being about to lose so kind a friend.

After that Godfrey heard the coming departure spoken of by many, together with a dozen reasons for the removal — nearly all of them flavoured with one piece of what he feared was the truth. It seemed to be pretty well known that Mr. Darlington's habit was mastering him quickly, and that he was rarely to be seen, towards the latter part of the day, in any better than a half-intoxicated state.

Well might poor Emily come alone to the little church, looking

so worn and pale that her bright girlhood seemed altogether to have left her.

The curate's heart often ached as he caught sight of the sweet sorrowful face; and mighty were his longings that he had the right to take her from her unshared troubles, even to the modest home which was the best he could ever offer her.

But now he had no hold on such a hope. As darkness gathered about that other household, the shadow fell on him too. Do what he would, he could not feel light-hearted or glad that Christmas-time.

'If I could only see her again,' he thought, as he finished a weary walk in the misty garden, on the eve of Christmas-day, by pacing down the plantation, through the graveyard, and so into the church. And behold, while the wish hovered unspoken on his lips, there stood Miss Darlington in the narrow aisle, glad, waiting perhaps to see him, for she came forward with heightened colour and outstretched hand:

'At last!' he exclaimed, hurrying forward to meet her. 'I thought I never was to speak to you again.'

'Nay,' she answered, 'I would not go without bidding you good-bye. I had not much time to help with the church this year, but I stayed purposely after the Daveneys and Wilsons left, because I did so hope you would come in.'

The curate forgot his last month's wearyings in delight at this avowal. His prudence was scattered to the winds, and before he was half aware of what he was doing, he was pouring out the story of his love, entreating her, if she might not yet share his home, to let him know and help her to bear her troubles.

'My darling,' he said, 'what is it that is changing you so? what is it that is taking you away from us? and why have you never let me see you of late?'

A stream of questions that the poor girl could not answer, for she was crying bitterly, unable for some minutes to speak a word.

Grievously perplexed at the effects of his words, Godfrey stood anxious and impatient, while she fought a battle with her tears and conquered them; then, not venturing a look towards him, she drew away a step, and almost unconsciously toying with a holly wreath, spoke at last tremulously and nervously:

'I have done very wrong. I only waited—*indeed*, I only waited to hear if you had sent—my poor gift—to your—your friend.'

He told her half-impatiently that the gift had gone almost as soon as she gave it, and as secretly as she had desired.

'Then I do thank you more than I can tell,' she said, once more voluntarily giving him her hand. And she added slowly and earnestly, 'I ask you one thing more—forget you ever spoke to me as you have just done. There are reasons why I must not, and—'

d, del. Edmund Evans, sc.

GODFREY DECLARES HIMSELF.

faltering a moment—'why I will not listen to such words. No, no, please *don't* make me cry again;' for he was at her side, trying to stop her words. What lover, indeed, would be likely to be put off with such entreaties as these? Not he, thought Godfrey; hear him she should; and he made her find her hat and leave the gray little church, while he eagerly and passionately pleaded his cause with her as slowly they moved on towards the home she was so soon to leave.

But all in vain. 'It cannot be.' 'It must not be.' 'I cannot tell you why.' These were the only answers he could wring from her. No argument, no entreaties could change her, though, poor girl, she had not strength or skill enough to conceal that it was her will, and not her heart, that was rejecting him.

'Will you *never* give me any other answer?' he asked, as they neared the gate of the White Cottage.

'I dare not think I ever shall,' she answered.

'And will you forgive me the pain that my presumption has caused you?' he asked jesuitically. 'I had almost forgotten till now how rich you were and how poor I am.'

'How *can* you! That is cruel!' she broke out. 'Indeed, you don't know *how* cruel you are. Ah, Godfrey!' for he held her, all unseen in the quiet shadowy lane, close in his arms for one moment while he said:

'Then I will wait. Whatever it be that keeps you from me cannot last for ever. Whether it should last for months or years, I'll wait. I'll have no wife if I cannot have you, Emily;' and then he released her, and left her without another word, striding off for a six-mile walk along the old Roman road close by, to cool his hot head and recall what few senses the last hour had not deprived him of altogether.

Chapter V.

AFTER WAITING COMES REWARD.

The next day brought its work of services, and 'Lady Margaret's dole of certain shillings and woollen garments and loaves of bread to six poor women of the parish of Maybeck.' Godfrey Bree had plenty to keep him occupied till the time came for his lonely Christmas dinner, for he had declined joining the family gathering at the Hall; and Major Garrett had gone to spend his Christmas from home.

But the dinner was dismal; not even Flop's companionship could make it otherwise. The one thought would obtrude itself, 'How long would it be thus with him? How many Christmas-tides must he pass alone? Would his rash love have ever the ending he longed for?' Brooding and depressed, the minutes lagged along heavily. The excitement of the afternoon before was telling on him

now, when every word that had passed filled his memory, to the exclusion of all else.

He started, as a nervous woman might have done, when a peal at the door-bell rang through the house, and hastened to relight the lamp (he had been sitting idly in the firelight) as Jim's wife opened the door to tell him that Mr. Darlington was waiting to speak with him, but would not come into the house.

'Now for it!' thought the curate, rousing himself for the anticipated fray; for he never questioned what must have called forth the visit. His mind was too full of that one idea; and he stepped out into the hall, where a cold wind was rushing about, slamming the doors and whistling mournfully through all the house.

'Pray come in, Mr. Darlington,' he begged, going out on the steps and standing shivering beneath the dark wintry sky.

'No, thank you,' said the other shortly; 'I am merely come to say good-bye; we shall be off to-morrow or the next day. *I* should be too busy to see you if you called. This place is *all* very well in the summer. What's that?'

'Nothing,' said the curate, peering into the darkness. 'What do you mean? I wish you would come in.'

'But it's confoundedly cold in the winter; that's why we are leaving,' went on Mr. Darlington rapidly; 'and I hate the country to walk in, one is so apt to meet all sorts of people. You're not inclined for a walk, are you?'

'Certainly not,' said the curate; 'and really I think it would be best for you to go home if you will not come in with me. It's bitterly cold, and beginning to snow.'

The flakes were coming down thick and fast as he spoke.

'Then I will be off,' said Mr. Darlington. 'Good-night and good-bye! Have you heard—I beg your pardon, I thought I was talking to some one else. Good-night!'

He went off down the garden path muttering strangely to himself, and Godfrey Bree stood watching his dark figure as long as it could be seen, little thinking that the departing man was hurrying carelessly on to meet his death.

But so it was. While the church bells were ringing merrily, and men gathered their children about them on their bright hearths that Christmas night, unknown to them all a life went out in their very midst. Late, after all the cottagers had gone to rest, the servants from the White House roused Mr. Bree and Jim from the rectory to help them in their search for their master.

And they found him at the bottom of the stone-quarry, where Godfrey had looked shudderingly down the first night he came to Maybeck. Dead! With broken crushed limbs, but the white cold face unhurt even by a scratch; the eyes, awfully wide open and staring now, that in life had never looked you fairly in the face.

An intensely cold day early in the following week, and the curate stood reading a short note that had just been given to him. It was from Emily Darlington, whose father he had buried that morning.

'I am going,' the writer said, 'to leave this very afternoon. I cannot see you, I cannot write to you again, till I have waked from this horrible dream; for so it seems to me. Be content to wait, perhaps for months; then I will write again.'

So, with the best patience he could muster, he did her bidding, and waited, not knowing where or with whom she was; hearing no word of or from her; watching sadly the rapid breaking-up of her deserted home, the close-shuttered dreariness of the rooms in which he had so often seen her; hearing the endless surmises as to her fortune, which was unanimously decided to be large; and her future, about which no one knew anything, but all had plenty to say, until at last, even in the little gossip-loving village, the subject was worn out, and the horror of the accident (if accident it was, and that God only knew) died away from men's minds, and left them free to discuss the incoming tenants of the White House.

The curate's love story had been well kept from the small world about him; none knew how anxiously he was waiting among them for the last chapter of that history.

It came at last, the letter she had promised—written to him from an old town just beyond the hills which lay before him as he read the pages.

'I am not at all the same person who went away five months ago,' she wrote. 'Then I was very rich, now I am very poor. I have only my dead mother's money to call my own; it is not a hundred a year. You see, I try to tell you the worst first, and yet not all the worst. How shall I write the truth about him, my father! He was always so good to me, and yet I never could be happy with him—not quite; and now I am going to make you hate him. You thought perhaps he had been born to plenty of money, or had earned it in some business or profession. Unhappily it was not so. He was only a junior partner in a firm of lawyers. His senior was an old man, and a very rich one, who had but one relative, a niece, to inherit his property. I think a marriage was once thought of between my father and this lady; but she preferred a man of her own choice, fitting in some respects, but most obnoxious to her uncle. A private marriage between them enraged Mr. Laurence into disinheriting his niece; and at his death, a few years later, it was found that he had left upwards of thirty thousand pounds to my father, making no mention of his then widowed niece in his will. That much all the world knew, and even then cried shame upon the old man for his harshness. But they did not know what my dear mother discovered when too late—that my father had secretly helped on the distasteful marriage,

and had then, alas, done all in his power to foster the estrange-ment between the uncle and niece, even—how could he do it!—keeping from her the knowledge of her uncle's illness, fearing lest at the last moment she should come between him and his expected fortune; and, worst of all, he told his dying partner that his niece refused to come, though he had sent entreating her to do so. I could tell you much more; but surely this is *too* much. It almost breaks my heart to have to write it. It quite broke my mother's heart when she knew all the truth. The fortune was a misery and a shame to her, as it has been to me. I thank God I am rid of it now, and all that wretched inheritance from my poor father has gone to its rightful owner, Mrs. Merlin. Would it were possible that any deed of mine could atone to her for all the misery my father's act brought her! But I can do no more. I have kept my promise to my mother, who told me the full truth only to impress on me the need of acting as I have done with the money as soon as I had the power, and I only tell you to justify myself. Surely I need not ask your pity for my father and for me. Is it not an awful thing to say his death lifted a load from my heart, although he was so good to me, and I loved him so when I was a child? Now you know why your story about Charlie Merlin troubled us so. Now I have told you all. Remember, you are not bound to me by any word of promise. It was riches kept us apart when you spoke to me on Christmas-eve. I dared not tell you then what you know now. If our poverty stands between us now, so be it; no single thought of mine shall ever reproach you.' Then a bit of girlish weakness stole in: 'But I should like to see you once.'

'Once!' cried the curate joyfully; 'ay, that she shall!' And he might almost have added, 'and for ever;' for the next day's meeting was but the first of many, and the weeks were but few before these two joined homes as well as hearts, and set out to face the world together, not over rich, but strong in youth and love—one of them at least living a new life, freed from the heavy burden that another's sin had bound upon her earlier years.

IN QUEER COMPANY

Bow Common is hardly the district for an admirer of the simple and the beautiful to explore, and much less the sort of place you'd care to reside in. Yet I live there; but not from choice—O dear, no!

If the unsavoury and villanous odours from the adjacent factories which daily pollute the atmosphere, and the midnight serenade of the festive costermonger as he clutches the top of my front railings in an imbecile endeavour to maintain his perpendicular, and howls out the burden of some lugubrious ditty under my bedroom-window at midnight—if these, and no end of other lively little incidents, can afford inducement to any sane man to take up his abode in that 'location,' I say, *let him go*, by all means.

As I've already said, I don't live there from choice. Fact is, I'm a railway clerk, on duty at a station about ten minutes' walk from where I 'hang out,' and I can't, with any degree of safety for my situation, reside any farther away from it. I *must* be there at 4.10 A.M., you see, to book the 'workmen's' train out.

Now, my nearest road to the station is right through a long dismal thoroughfare—if you can call it *that* even—bounded by the Tower Hamlets Cemetery on the one hand, and by the arches of the Blackwall Railway on the other; there are no houses near it; and it isn't by any means the sort of promenade that a nervous person would care to select for a 'moonlight walk.' There are fine facilities for gentlemen in the garrotting interest; then, again, the proximity of the cemetery isn't altogether so pleasant at night-time.

I was popping along there about 4.55 one morning last winter—walking, in fact, as fast as I knew how, for I was a good seven minutes behind, and I'd no time to lose. I feared I should miss my first train after all, when I noticed a small black object lying close to the buttress of an arch on my left. I picked it up, and hurried on faster after pocketing it, to make up for the one or two seconds I'd lost over it. It was an old tobacco-pouch; and I hadn't got my full supply of the weed with me, so I regarded this as a bit of a windfall. Arriving almost breathless at the station, I unlocked the door and threw up my window to book about thirty workmen standing in a group outside, and who were making some strong comments upon my tardy appearance. This done, I turned up an extra gas-jet and proceeded to inspect my prize, wondering what tobacco it contained—I smoke 'shag' myself. There wasn't any tobacco

though, much to my disgust; the contents were a pair of dice, small key, and a couple of printed cards, together with a pawnticket inscribed, 'Waistcoat, 2*s*.' The dice and pawnticket didn't interest me, so I put them in my till-drawer, and looked at the cards; the larger of the two was headed:

'A FRIENDLY LEAD

Will take place at the Alfred's Head, on Saturday the 26th instant, for the benefit of Paddy Turner, better known as "Jack the Lemon," who has been "in trouble" the last four months, and hopes to find his old pals gather round him now he needs it. Paddy was never the man to ruck himself, and it is to be hoped he may see old faces rallying round him on this trying occasion. Sparring up-stairs from 7 till 8, after which hour harmony will commence. Chair to be taken by Paddy in person, faced by "Cuttie," and assisted by Grandfather Vinegar, Corkey Jem, Hosten Tostin, Tommy the Shootsman, Young Cocklin, Porkey Cannon, Cast Iron, Young Curley, Jack the Flatman, Young Imperial, and a host of talent and old friends too numerous to mention.'

This concoction rather puzzled me. I felt curious as to the nature of 'the trouble' that had lain heavy on the soul of Mr. Turner for four long months. 'I think I should have resigned myself to it by that time,' I thought; and then, *just* then, I began to have a faint suspicion of what 'the trouble' was.

The other card was simply an announcement of an approaching raffle for a silk handkerchief, the proceeds of which were to be devoted to the sole and especial benefit of some ornament to society yclept 'Young Tadger;' and the welfare of that worthy having but little interest for me, I threw it aside, and hearing a tap at the office-door, opened it for the admittance of my ticket-collector, Harry Stocks, who had come to pay-in the previous day's excess fares.

Now, Stocks was somewhat of an original in his way, a sort of nineteenth-century Sam Weller, and, in fact, the most arrant Cockney I had ever encountered. He had been born and bred in Mile-end, and, as he was wont to boast, had never been more than thirty miles out of London in his life—and *that* only once.

As far as acquaintance with the beerhouses and 'pubs' of the East were concerned, he was better than a directory. I thought, therefore, that the *ménage* of a 'friendly lead' must be familiar to him; so I showed him the cards, and, describing the manner of my finding them, inquired what sort of affair it was.

'Well,' said Stocks, 'this is rather a mixed job. I know nearly all the lot myself—by name at least—know the 'ouse too; it's used mostly by costers and such. This Turner *was* a coster; now he's a sort of half coster, half fightin'-man. Lor bless you, no! Prize-fightin' isn't knocked on the head so far as them little bits goes. You see, he's reckoned rather a good man with his fists among such as himself, and they often gets up a purse of five pound or so, to be fought for, and such-like. You can see 'em at it almost any Sunday mornin' out Temple Mills way. They get it up among

hemselves, and there's generally a beershop-keeper or two lays two, hree, or it might be five pound on the man he fancies. I don't now altogether—that is, exactly—what Paddy got "put away" or. No, not for theft, sir; 'sault and battery, I think. Leastways, he gave some bloke a awful hiding in a 'ouse down Stepney-green way one night. I know that was the bottom of it. Ah, yes, aggravated assault, that *was* it. Now, as for a "lead," why, it's a bit of a meetin', and a "sing-song;" an' just when you go in you put whatever you can spare into a plate they bring round. No, they *are* a rum lot, too; but anybody—any *gentleman*—might sit there night after night an' never have a nasty word offered him as long as he kep' a civil tongue in his head. Be as well to drink though if you was asked; if you didn't, and the bloke happened to be a bit "boozed," he'd very like chuck it over you; and they don't say "no" if you call for a pot after drinkin' along with 'em. What's that other card? Raffle—ah, same sort of thing—pretty much—there's always a song or a bit o' sparrin' goin' on. You ought to drop in an' see 'em, sir.'

'I was just thinking of the same thing. Let's see, I'm off at two on Saturday; surely you can get Lodge to work your shift for that day. I shouldn't care about going there by myself.'

Stocks said he knew Lodge would do duty for him on that afternoon; so it was arranged that he should call at my lodgings at 6 P.M. on the evening in question, and we'd both go down together.

Sure enough, at five past six, a quiet double knock at the door of my domicile announced the presence of Mr. Stocks. Then a rustling and a giggling sound apprised me that, according to his usual custom, Mr. Harry was attempting a slight flirtation with my landlady's servant, which I nipped in the bud by calling him up-stairs. He marched up, and sauntering into my solitary bedroom, inquired whether I was ready. I said, 'I hardly knew what to wear;' so Stocks, rummaging over my wardrobe, selected a reefing-jacket, a single-breasted waistcoat, and a billycock, and proceeded to attire me to his own satisfaction. When he'd done with me, I ventured to survey myself in the looking-glass, and found my appearance was as much like a decent young workman who had 'cleaned himself' for an evening stroll as anything I'd ever seen. So Harry and I lit our pipes and sallied forth down the Bow-road, *en route* for the Alfred's Head.

We strolled quietly down through Mile-end-road, meeting with nothing of interest, until we got to the corner of Commercial-street; when it occurred to my friend that 'the best drop of Irish in London' was procurable at an adjacent 'pub'; and having plenty of time to spare, we must needs drop in; and having tested the quality of the whisky, and got a cigar each, we strolled on till our farther progress was impeded by about eighteen or twenty of the élite of White-

chapel, who were pensively gazing into a clothier's shop-window—obviously there was some attraction.

'What's up there, Harry?'

'Only those bills of Smith's—circulars, you know. Seen 'em, ain't you?'

I said I hadn't; and Harry stepped into the shop, and came out with a couple of the bills in question, one of which he handed me:

To His Rile Highness the Prince of Nails, and His Imperial Majesty the Emperor and His Wench.

SMITH,

Well known by everybody to be the only Genuine Clothing Manufacturer in Whitechapel, and acknowledged by the Natives to be the Cheapest and Best House in the Neighbourhood for Cord and Cloth Clothing of every description.

THE CHAMPION OF ENGLAND SLAP-UP TOG AND OUT-AND-OUT KICKSIES BUILDER,

Nabs the chance of putting his customers awake that he has just made his escape from Canada, not forgetting to clap his mawleys on a rare dose of stuff, but on his return home was stunned to tumble against one of the Tip-top Manufacturers of Manchester, who had stuck to the gilt, cut his lucky from his drum, and about namousing off to the Swan Stream, leaving behind him a Valuable Stock of Moleskins, Cords, Velveteens, Plushes, Doeskins, Box-Cloths, Pilots, &c. &c., and having the ready in his kick, grabbed the chance, stepped home with the swag, and is now safely landed at his crib; he can turn out Toggery very slap-up, to lick all the Slop-shops in the Neighbourhood, at the following low prices—for

READY GILT—TICK BEING NO GO:

Upper Benjamins, built on a downy plan, a monarch to half-a-finnuff. Proper cut Togs, for Business or Pleasure, turned out slap, 1 pound; Sneaking or Loungin Togs, at any price you name. Fancy Sleeve Blue Plush, Pilot or Box-Cloth Ves cut saucy, a couter; Black or Fancy Vests, made to flash the dicky or tight round the scrag, from six and a tanner; Ditto ditto Sealskin, Buckskin, Doesk Moleskin, Deerskin, Chamoiskin, or any other skin, made to order at 6 ho notice. Pair of Kerseymere or Fancy Doeskin Kicksies, any colour, cut peg- half-tights, or to drop down over the trotters, from nine and a tanner to 21 Double-milled Drab or Plum Box, built in the Melton-Mowbray style (by me four-and-twenty bob; Worsted or Bedford Cords in every colour, cut very slap, the artful dodge, a canary; Pair of Out-and-out Cords, built very serious, six bob and a kick, upwards; Rare Fancy Cords, cut awfully loud, 9 times; of Bang-up or Constitution Cords, 14 and a half; Pair of Moleskins, any built hanky-spanky, with a double fakement down the sides and artful butt the bottom, half a monarch; Out-and-out Black Doe Trousers, which st comers, made to measure in any style, 14 and a tanner.

Beware of the Worthless Imitations made by the Roughs at the same pr

Liveries, Mud Pipes, Knee Caps, and Trotter Cases built very low.

A Large Assortment of Caps to fit all sorts of Nuts.

A decent allowance made to Seedy Swells, Tea-Kettle Purgers, Quill Mushroom Fakers, Counter Jumpers, Organ Grinders, Bruisers, Head Rob Flunkeys out of Collar.

Shallow Coves, See Sailors, or Fellows on the High-fly rigged out on t est notice.

Kid's Clothing of every description kept ready-made or made to mea

Gentlemen finding their own Broady can be accommodated.

'That's *his* way of advertising, Tony,' said Stocks. 'Very good way it *is*, too, considering the neighbourhood. Whitechapel people rather like to be thought a bit "fly," and he seems to know it. We ain't above five minutes from the Alfred now; best chuck away the stump of cigar. Down here!'

And we diverged into a narrow dirty thoroughfare of wretched little one-story houses, the occupants of which seemed to have devoted themselves almost exclusively to shoe-binding, cobbling, artificial-flower making, and mangling—though where the linen came from that required mangling was a mystery indeed.

At the door of one of these habitations lounged a somewhat untidy and unwashed gentleman in shirt-sleeves none of the cleanest. He was holding sweet commune with a kindred spirit in the chimney-sweeping line, and they seemed together to have arrived at a mutual agreement upon some point; for as we approached, he of the shirt-sleeves turned lazily and unsteadily round, and yelled up the passage of his mansion:

'Bill-ee!'

'Ullo-o-o!' from the far end of the passage.

'Kim 'ere! *Look* sharp!'

Bill-ee appeared in person forthwith.

'Bill-ee (Give us tuppence, Joe?), cut round to Webb's—*Webb's* this time, mind yer!—cut round to Webb's, and fetch another pot of 'umble. 'Old 'ard, now. Do as yer told, and *go* to Webb's. You're —— fond of the Lion, 'cos it's a yard or so nearer. Go on, now, an' look sharp back. Ah,' added shirt-sleeves, leering round with a fishy gaze and a maudlin shake of his unkempt head, 'blow them as 'ud rob a poor bloke of his ponghelo! Lord send as 'ow it war a penny a gallon, so as hevery cove could git a skinful for 'arf a dollar!'

His friend gave vent to an expressive 'Ah;' and the sentiment seemed to meet with general sympathy from five or six tatterdemalions who were loafing round the next doorway.

We proceeded on; and arriving at the end of the street, turned sharply to the right.

'Here we are; 'bout fifty yards farther on,' said Stocks. 'Wait half a minute outside, while I go across the road and get two or three smokes—they've got nothing but pickwicks in there, and bad at that!'

He left me contemplating the exterior of a dirty and very questionable-looking little beershop—on the cellar-flap of which a gentleman, attired in a 'guernsey,' was executing an elaborate 'double-shuffle.' The survey wasn't reassuring, and I walked round the corner, where I was suddenly confronted by a young lady in a very low-necked dress, with short sleeves that displayed a pair of muscular red arms to their fullest advantage; head-covering she had

none, unless a mammoth chignon may be considered such; and one eye was very suggestive of a fading rainbow.

'Porkey up-stairs, young man?'

I had an idea that I'd heard the name before somewhere.

'Porkey, Porkey!' I said. 'Who on earth's Porkey? Can't say I know him.'

'*You* know; Porkey Cannon—*Joe* Cannon; got a sleeve-weskit on, and a billycock. He's a-sparrin' now—leastways, he *oughter* be. He said he wouldn't be later than seven or a quarter-past, an' he's alwis in about time.'

I would have answered, but my fair interlocutor, catching a glimpse of a bullet-head and a square pair of shoulders inside the bar, said:

'Cuss 'im, there he *is!*' and pushed her way in forthwith.

I, seeing Stocks crossing the road, followed after, in time to catch a murmur of complaint from Mr. Cannon, that

'It was —— 'ard as a man couldn't drop into a 'ouse to 'ave a civil pint with 'is pal, but wot he must 'ave a —— wench fly-blowin' about arter 'im.'

And the lady of his love, feeling herself thus indirectly rebuked, excused herself on the ground that it wasn't her intention to have disturbed Mr. P. C. in his moments of relaxation, only that a young man outside had informed her that he (Mr. C.) was one of the company present, and ''ad bin a-sparrin'.'

'*Wot* young man?' inquired Porkey, scowling round the bar in a manner that boded ill for the object of his resentment.

'Why, a 'spectable-looking young chap as wos— O, there he *is!*' And the fair one directed an appealing and expressive glance at me, which obviously showed that she wished me to corroborate her.

'That ain't good enough for *me*,' scornfully remarked Mr. Cannon; 'the genelman and me is puffect strangers. *Wos* that right, sir, wot she was a-sayin' of jist now?'

'Well, that wasn't *exactly* the way it occurred,' I said, with what *I* intended for a conciliatory smile.

'No, I knowed —— well it wosn't; that kid ain't good enough for me, old duchess. 'Ave a drop 'long o' me,' said Porkey, in a mollified tone. 'Wot's it to be?'

'Drop o' stout-and-mild, Joe,' curtly answered his lady.

'Drink, old man,' said Porkey, extending the pot towards me; and I drank deeply—so deeply, in fact, that by the expression on Mr. Cannon's countenance I fancied I had secured a place in his esteem. Then he indulged in a little affectionate horseplay with his beloved, and, on Stocks handing me a cigar, I stepped to the other side of the bar for a light, and to inspect a long yellow placard which was tacked to the bar partition. *Verbatim et literatim* it ran:

Immense Attraction! Grand Extra Night!!

THE SKULL-CRACKER'S ARMS, COBWEB-STREET, CATSMEAT-SQUARE.

A GRAND CONCERT AND BALL

Will take place at the above House,

In aid of the Funds of the Laisey Cabman's Society, they having exhausted all their ready Cash during the late severe Weather.

Chairman: LONG SNOW, the Haymarket Ghost.

The following talented gents have consented to appear:

Industrious CHARLEY JONES and UPHAM, from Clapham, will sing a duet.

Little CURLEY, by permission of Mr. Lotion of the Lord Raglan, will appear in Character.

Long JIM will squint Blink Bonny, 30 minutes, for £5 a-side.

Signor PHEBY will sing 'Nix my Dolly, Pals, fake away.'

Mr. JACK BROWN will sing 'We've swept the Seas before, Boys,' and, by the kind permission of Mr. Fakes, the Pawnbroker, will exhibit his Wonderful Lamp.

PIN WIRE will appear, he having pledged his word to drink all the rum that may be called for, and go home sober!

ARTHUR STEVENS will recite 'The Faker and the Flatman,' after which he will be permitted to sleep in the corner until further notice.

I removed this effusion from the wall, and addressing myself to a listless-looking hobbledehoy, who was puffing a long clay at my elbow, asked if he knew what was meant by it, or if it alluded to anybody or anything in particular. He seemed to brighten up for a moment, and looked round the compartment intently. Then he craned his neck over the partition he was leaning against for a second or so, and said,

'D'ye hear! Look 'ere—see 'im wots a-'avin the bread-and-cheese an' pickles in the fur corner there?'

'Yes,' I said.

'Well' (with significance), 'you arst '*im*!'

I refrained, for I thought from the gentleman's appearance that he mightn't relish impertinent inquiries; and just then in tumbled some seven or eight young men and women, who very soon made a bear-garden of the place, with their 'larking' and horseplay, and, as the din began to abate, I noticed a sound overhead as of a vigorous shuffling of feet, with now and then a scrambling noise followed by a dull heavy thud, of which I half divined the meaning.

'Sparring up-stairs, ain't they?' I asked of the youth I had last spoken to.

'Ah, Paddy's got 'em on now 'long o' Joe Gardner—leastways 'e *wos* a-puttin' 'em on wen I come down!'

Presently the noise up-stairs ceased, and suddenly a stream of about twenty or so young fellows came tumbling pell-mell down-stairs into the bar, and the place commenced to ring with shouts for pots of ''arf-an'-'arf,' &c.; then the door separating our compartment was suddenly opened, and a face thickly pitted with smallpox and surmounted by a rather concave nose was protruded inside.

'Good luck t'yer, Paddy! Wot cheer, old man? Wots it ter be? Kim inside,' was the greeting accorded our new acquisition from half a dozen throats.

Paddy accordingly *came* in, and hinted his inclination to partake of the bowl by a suggestive wipe across his lips with his jacket-sleeve.

'Drink, old son!' was his first invitation, from an ugly little man in a corner, who proffered a quart-pot for the hero's acceptance (I didn't see anything smaller *than* a quart-pot, by the bye).

Paddy drank, and, having availed himself of about eleven other invitations of a similar nature, must have absorbed into his system at least five pints of malt liquor without being affected thereby—at least to all appearance. Then he turned his attention to business, and inquired hoarsely of a friend,

'Any o' the blokes in the front room, 'Arry? I didn't stop to see as I was a-comin' down.'

'Ony Stevey,' responded the gentleman addressed, 'and he is bloomin' well brewered, there's *no* kid; they put 'im up there to "doss" for 'arf a hour, so as to git 'im right a bit. He *wos* on, s'help me 'tatur!'

'Well,' quoth Mr. T., meditatively addressing his friends, 'ow are we a-goin' on, chaps? Are we a-goin' up now, or wait for Cuttie? It's a-gettin' late!'

Somebody suggested that 'Cuttie' was probably 'flatch kennard' by this time (he was evidently familiar with the habits of the gentleman). So it was decided that festivities should commence forthwith, and Stocks and I, preceded by the bulk of the company, wended our way up-stairs, into a larger and dimly-lighted front room, where, upon turning up the gas, the recumbent form of Stevey the somnolent was observable on a bench, snoring away mellifluously. This worthy, having been aroused by means of a lighted tobacco-pipe being held under his nostrils, arose, sneezed violently for a minute or so, shook himself, and, giving a stupendous yawn, said,

'Give us 'old o' some ponghelo, some ov yer, good luck t'yer! I *wos* dry though, s'help me!' said Stevey apologetically to his companion, as he surveyed the tankard with a rueful air. Stevey had absorbed about a pint and a half from the pot proffered him, and his friend didn't half seem to like it; the goblet was therefore duly replenished at Mr. Stevey's expense.

Things didn't seem to be making much progress towards conviviality up to now; the company seemed to be rather conversationally disposed, and sat chatting in little groups of three or four all over the room. I overheard a fragment from the lot nearest me. A stalwart red-faced young woman inquired huskily of a male friend,

'*Wot's* the matter o' Jarvey?' indicating by a nod a young

man with a frightfully-contused optic, who was playing a game of 'shove ha'penny' by himself on a bench at the other end of the room.

'Ow d'yer mean? 'is heye?'

'Ah! Bin in a row, hain't he?'

'H'm! Ah, bin a-sloggin' long o' Nobby Morgan. D'ye hear, Jarvee! Kim 'ere!'

'*Now* wot is it?' savagely responded the gentleman addressed.

'Who's bin a "mousin'" on yer, old man?' jocosely asked his friend; for which considerate inquiry he was exhorted to proceed to a place unmentionable to ears polite, and to mind his own sanguinary business.

The first gentleman scoffed at this display of peevishness on his friend's part, and besought him (Mr. Jarvey) to 'keep 'is 'air on;' then turning to the lady who had been so solicitous in her inquiries respecting Jarvey, he asked for a reel of cotton, remarking that 'Jarvey 'ad got the needle, and wanted something to threadle it with.'

Mr. Turner and my friend were holding converse together at the end of the long table just as a gaunt bony man of about fifty odd years entered the room bearing a tin soup-plate, which contained probably fifteen or sixteen shillings in sixpences and threepenny and fourpenny pieces. He came in with a shambling gait and a half-apologetic sort of air, and bore the appearance of a sort of superannuated costermonger—did such a thing exist—and he seemed to suffer from a chronic depression of spirits. Approaching Stocks, he silently presented his plate and received therein a shilling; he brightened up a bit at this and approached me, whereupon getting another he assumed quite a joyous expression of countenance, and moved round the room at a thoroughly brisk pace, when, having completed his collection, he made a dive at the door, turned round, gave a violent tug at the peak of his cap by way of a bow, and disappeared into space.

Paddy then suddenly arose, cleared his throat, and said, 'Jist a moment, genelmen, please;' and silence being established, he commenced to inveigh bitterly against the delinquent 'Cuttie.'

'Wot *I* grumbles at,' quoth Paddy, 'is not 'is disappintin' ony *myself*, but *other* blokes as wasn't behind in comin' forrard when he (Cuttie) wanted a bob or so bad enough hisself. Any chap take 'is place till 'e turns up—if he *is* a-goin' to turn up? It's bloomin' 'ard lines to be sucked in like this. He's a-boozin' somewhere, you may lay yer life, and forgot all about it. Perhaps Mr. Stocks 'ud oblige—might I ha' the pleasure, sir?'

Stocks assented, and seated himself at the foot of the table, where, having armed himself with a small boxwood hammer, he rapped loudly on the table therewith, called 'Order!' three or four

times, and announced that 'our worthy chair would oblige with the first song.'

Mr. Turner coughed, cleared his throat, and having sought inspiration from a long contemplation of the ceiling, together with an equally long pull at a quart-pot, started something in a husky quavering note, and breaking down, said, 'That's too 'igh—*old* 'ard.' Then he went a bit lower, and delivered himself of a quaint chant—you couldn't call it a song—which he told us afterwards was 'The Tanyard Side.' The chorus ran

> 'O, no, kind sir, I'm a factory gal, she modestlee replied,
> An' I daily labour *for* my bread down by the tanyard side.'

A hammering of pots and shouts of 'Brayvo, Paddy!' greeted Mr. T.'s attempt to break the ice of the evening, and then Stocks inquired,

'What shall we say after that, Paddy?'—an intimation to the singer that a toast or sentiment of some kind was expected of him.

Paddy was prompt to respond. He lifted his goblet, and looking across it, said,

'May the road to' (say 'Hades') 'grow green for the want o' travellers!'

They drank that with gusto.

The chairman then announced that 'our worthy wice 'ud oblige;' and Stocks accordingly sang a doleful ballad, of which a certain 'Lord William' seemed to be the hero—or villain. He 'proved the overthrow' of some confiding maiden, if my memory serves me, and was duly haunted by her in consequence.

Nemesis having overtaken the base betrayer in some form or other, this depressing song, with its equally depressing chorus, was brought to a close; but however it was received among the men, it certainly found favour with the female portion of the community. That sort of thing always *does* among women of that type.

'The call rests with you, brother Chair,' said Stocks; and Paddy informed us that our old friend 'Young Cocklin' would oblige with the next.

Cocklin then arose, and removing a huge quid from his mouth, took off his cap, flung the quid therein, and replacing the cap on his head, said,

'Well, I'll *try* "Flash Company," chaps; 'an' if I break down, you'll ha' to pick me up.'

If Mr. Cocklin's song was descriptive of his own habits, he *must* have been a bad lot and no mistake. This was the chorus:

> 'O, darncin' an' drinkin' wos all my *de*-light,
> O, drinkin' an' a-darncin' an' a-stoppin' out all night;
> O, a-stoppin' out all night, my boys, like a great many more,
> If it 'adn't a-bin *for* flash company, I should never a-bin so poor!'

This last singer had a pretty tolerable voice, and whatever he

lacked in harmony he made up in sheer lung power. A little ovation greeted him on resuming his seat. 'Goodo, Cocklin!' 'Brayvo-o!' 'Angcore!' 'Way-oh! Cocklin! D'ye hear, last wuss over agin!' And wetting his lips from his neighbour's pot—everybody present seemed to prefer drinking from somebody else's pot rather than his own—Cocklin gave us the last verse again, and on finishing remarked that he believed he was entitled to a call, and he should like to hear some lady sing, as the chaps 'ad bin a-'aving on it all their own way. Would Kate Gallagher oblige? He could see she was a-bustin' to sing.

This little pleasantry was resented by Miss Gallagher playfully hurling an arrowroot biscuit at the last speaker's head. Then she said she didn't mind tryin' one as she knowed on; and Paddy having established order, Katie, after the usual number of little coughs and giggles necessary to the occasion, started on a theme eminently well chosen. She sang a ditty called 'The Prisoners' Van,' and right manfully did the company give mouth to the chorus:

> 'Into a wehicle long an' black
> They shoved my fancy man;
> O, my CUSS upon the driver
> Wot drove the prisoners' wan!'

Miss Gallagher finished; and from the applause and the general remarks made concerning her conbtriution to the 'harmony,' it seemed to be considered *the* song of the evening. It took me by surprise, however, when the chairman rose and said:

'We 've 'ad the pleasure o' 'earin' Mr. Stocks, genel*men*; an' I should be werry 'appy if 'is friend 'ud oblige. I mean the genelman wot's a-doin' 'is cigar in the corner there, and a-takin' stock.'

A subdued and anything but enthusiastic rapping of knuckles seconded this jocose invitation.

Now, I didn't care about making a fool of myself, so, stepping over to Turner, I professed my inability to oblige, and meekly inquired what penalty a recalcitrant member must needs submit to.

'Gallon o' beer,' laconically and somewhat sulkily responded that gentleman. He seemed to have grave doubts as to whether that amount of liquor would be forthcoming.

'Call for *three* gallons, then, Mr. Chair—that'll make a level three bob of it,' I said; and thereupon a general buzz of satisfactory remarks pervaded the room, and a stalwart coster behind me observed:

'*That's you!* Nothin' like doin' it proper, if yer 'as ter spout yer bloomin' shirt arterwards!' And he accompanied his remark with a slap on my back that fairly fetched the breath out of me.

Popularity is cheap at three gallons of malt.

Paddy then called our attention to the fact that it wanted but five-and-twenty minutes to twelve; that there was but time for

about two more songs, and we 'might as well 'ave a good un t wind up with.' He begged to call upon— Paddy paused and looke angrily towards the middle of the room, where two ladies, prett well gone in liquor, had commenced what gave signs of being violent altercation. There was every prospect of a general row this wasn't nipped in the bud; so Turner quitted his chair, an plunged into the knot of disputants, where, having taken one of th fair brawlers by the shoulders, a peaceably-disposed friend took th same freedom with the other, and the result of this friendly inte position was a scene that fairly baffled description; for in a mome a sudden hustling, scuffling sound was heard, mingled with oat and screams, as men and women rolled over each other, and claw and scratched at friend or foe indiscriminately. This was vari by the loudly-expressed asseverations of a sturdy coster, far a vanced in beer, and eager to establish a private little fight on h own account. I had heard him addressed as 'Darkie' during t course of the evening.

'I'm good enough for any —— cove here,' remarked Darki 'Will any —— man put 'is sanguinary *dooks* up an' try? 'Ere!- *look* 'ere!—'ere's 'arf a dollar to any man as 'll knock my —— orf!'

At this juncture Mr. Darkie was seized by two friends sober than himself, and was hurried from the room, indulging himself a torrent of blasphemy at each step.

I stepped over to Stocks, who remarked:

'Looks good enough to travel, don't it, Tony?'

I said I thought it was.

'Now, genelmen, *please!*' said, or rather yelled, the landlo exhibiting his head through the half-open door. Seeing the st of things he withdrew that portion of him, and sang out down-stai 'Turn out, Phil—sharp!'

In two seconds the gas was turned off, and Stocks and I sh through the open door into the darkness, groping our way dow stairs with what speed we might. Passing into the street we fou a batch of ill-conditioned hobbledehoys, who had been attracted the commotion up-stairs, and were thirsting for the spectacle o street fight—no rarity in that neighbourhood. Reaching Whi chapel-road, we stopped to light our pipes, and started at a sharpi pace for home. Beaumont-square was passed, then the Glob bridge, and as we halted at the corner of Grove-road (where we h to separate) Stocks asked:

'Going there again, old man?'

'Not if I know myself.'

And we shook hands for the night.

ANTHONY LEIGH.

ON SOME DIFFICULTIES IN NOMENCLATURE

I WELL remember, though it happened many years ago—stretching far back indeed into those happy salad days, when judgment, if somewhat verdant, was so cool and easy—being placed in a sore strait of doubt and uncertainty. I had written a prize essay (it did not get the prize, by the way, but that is a detail). In the little country town where my lot was for the time cast, some of us youth, with the assistance of one or two of the local clergymen and several other gentlemen of varying standing and degree, had formed ourselves into a small literary and social club, meeting at stated intervals to interchange ideas upon various topics, with a view to aiding each other's mental development and insuring pleasant companionships and congenial society. The idea answered very well for a time. I doubt whether we contributed much from our scanty individual stores to the sum of the world's wisdom. Probably not; but we were, nevertheless, on very excellent terms with ourselves and our queer little efforts. Once during each session (we met during the four winter months, and 'session' was voted a good word; it was one of the happy inspirations of Maggs, our 'poet,' and adopted instanter) we had a kind of semi-public festivity, when the squire or rector, or as big a luminary as we could secure, took the chair, and a digest of the proceedings was duly inserted in the county paper. These were proud times for us—proud, but yet not without anxiety; for the interest of the evening culminated in the announcement from the chair of the names of the fortunate candidates for the honour of having penned—first, the best poem; and secondly, the best essay. For the poem a subject was always given, and though several of us, our souls stirred by those faint uncertain throes of mental indigestion which, happily for our future welfare, so soon subsided and died away in the darkness—though, I say, many of us tried our small best for the wreath of victory, we were nothing against the tremendous Maggs. The deuce was in the fellow. The subject mattered not one jot. Epical, historical, tragical, sentimental (we eschewed the comic), he was always to the fore. I had my own private conviction, I remember, that I possessed a large undeveloped share of the divine afflatus, and made stupendous exertions to come out first on the occasion when 'The Pleasures of Poetry' was announced as the subject for treatment. I have a distinct recollection that I took Pope as my model, and commenced in the real, unmistakable, orthodox fashion common to the writers of his school:

> 'Attend, O Goddess of the sacred shell,
> And you, ye Muses nine, attend as well.'

This was the invocation: appropriate and highly chaste and pleasing and original it sounded to my young ears—very different from the musty flavour it has somehow acquired from twenty years' keeping. But my chaste originality had, as usual, to succumb to the undaunted Maggs, who penned a Pindaric ode of three hundred lines that fairly left us all miles behind. It was Eclipse first, and the rest nowhere.

How curious to reflect that this same Maggs, of whom, notwithstanding our occasional secret little envyings, we were all so proud as a kind of poet laureate in embryo, should take to sugar-baking as his line of life! I chanced to meet him only the other day, and in answer to my inquiries, bred from the remembrance of old times, whether he still flirted with the sacred muse, he grew indignant at my allusion to such folly; he would as soon think of flirting with an opera-dancer, he said—Mrs. M. being, as I suspected, the restraining influence in either contingency.

As the field of poetry was therefore so unfairly taken up as the private grazing-ground of Mr. Maggs' Pegasus, I determined to concentrate all my energies upon the essay—the other domain of literature left open to conquest. We were not tied to any particular subject, being only fettered in length, and a stipulation that our efforts should confine themselves to the wide limits lying within the range of literature, science, or art. My paper cost me many weeks of anxious care and preparation. As before I had chosen Pope, so now I at first honoured Addison with my preference. But his clear simplicity of style was difficult to follow. Where I attained simplicity I lacked subject matter; and I felt an uneasy conviction that my occasional clearness betrayed a corresponding want of depth. So, with a sigh, I abandoned the *Spectator*, and adopted a more composite style, which, basing itself on no particular prototype, combined in no small degree the better qualities of Goldsmith, Irving, and Macaulay. The result was highly pleasing. It satisfied the sternest requirements of my judgment. If occasionally laboured, it was never unintelligible; if sometimes didactic, it was never dull. The sentences were rounded off with that careful precision which guarantees good workmanship; the frequent quotations were well chosen and apt; the manuscript was clearly written, in a good bold hand, on one side of the paper only, as the rules demanded, and signed, also according to the rules, with my motto, 'Gradus ad Parnassum.' I had chosen this after much mental exercitation for my poem, and though not so strictly apposite in the case of a prose production, it was too good to lightly forego, and its failure in the one case made me regard it with that peculiar affection with which mothers are said to best love their least fortunate offspring. And then there only remained the title. For the first time I was brought face to face with the Great Difficulty of Nomenclature. It cost me

more labour than the whole of the composition. I felt that it must be clear, concise, explanatory. I had touched upon such a wide variety of subjects, that I grew at last hopeless of finding any title which would give the faintest clue to the stores of knowledge I had so laboriously focussed into a perfect whole; and I positively forget the title I ultimately adopted when at last I made up my mind to one of the many hundred prefixes which suggested themselves to my fertile brain. I well remember the pang which came with the reflection that it was the only blot upon my achievement—the certainty which pointed to it as the *teterrima causa* of my failure. For Dickson carried off the prize, and Johnson came in for the honours of *proxime accessit*. The bitterness of my disappointment soon toned down, and nowadays there comes a gentle amusement in thinking over my boyish conceit and mock wisdom and vanity. Could I write now with Solomon's knowledge of mankind, or Sterne's power of humour, I doubt if I should ever be so entirely satisfied as I was with my poor little stillborn essay, of which even the name—the dreadful hopeless name—has escaped my recollection. And yet what throes and pangs that name cost me; what weary hours of doubt and deliberation! It haunted my waking hours and disturbed my dreams. The task of selecting that hated prefix made me so miserable, that at last, in sheer despair, I pounced down upon an unlucky heading, as bad, I have no doubt, if I could but recall it, as the hundred others that had marshalled themselves for competition, only, after due deliberation, to be consigned to limbo. And so I found peace, but not content; for it was the name, after all, that damned my production, as surely as Charles Lamb could trace the grim failure of '*Mr. H——*,' his one and only farce, to a similar cause.

I have dwelt with some 'insistance,' as George Eliot says, upon this christening process, because it seems to me one of those curiosities of authorship which will probably be of interest to those who care for literature itself or literature makers. Not that the great nomenclature difficulty is peculiar to the science of letters. Almost any section of nature's or man's produce would form an equally good peg whereupon to hang one's meditations. Take babies, for example. See what a fertile field those interesting little objects open up for us! If I am correctly informed, one of the chief anxieties of the recently married feminine mind, when certain conditions prevail, lies in the appellation to be bestowed upon the result of the conditions when fulfilled. The husband, if consulted, is probably prosaic and indifferent. 'If it's a boy, call it John, after me; if a girl, what better name can it have than its mother's?' But, whatever the ultimate choice, we may be pretty sure that the fond mother expectant goes anxiously through the whole list, from Abraham and Ada to Zachariah and Zelda, dwelling fondly on the pretty names—Herbert, Arthur, and Reginald, Grace, Edith, and Clara, and pass-

ing over the horrifying Timothys and Uriahs, the Betsys and Jemimas, in shuddering silence—so that when the time comes for the little lacework and fine-linen contrivances, and the elaborate berceaunette to be brought into requisition, the innocent occupant thereof has already been labelled with its identifying mark. Its distinct responsibility in the matter is often publicly proclaimed in the first column of the *Times*; nay, not unfrequently one comes across an announcement of this kind: 'May the 10th, at the Hollies, Clapham, the wife of George Smithson, Esq., of a son (Arthur Ernest), who only survived his birth a few hours.' Poor little Arthur Ernest! poor Mrs. George Smithson! What a sad glimpse the name of the brief existence that has become an angel ere we read gives into the past months of hope, and expectation, and keen motherly love, and keener motherly sorrow!

So that the difficulty of nomenclature strikes deep. It not only applies to books and babies, but to new colonies and new crinolines; not only to the astronomer 'when a new planet swims into his ken,' or the deep-sea explorer who drags from its long concealment, thousands of fathoms below the air and light (as we understand the words), some hitherto unsuspected mollusc, but to the great inventor of a patent blacking or beneficent hair-dye; though these last benefactors of mankind have, with much ingenuity, hit upon a method of their own, which achieves tremendous results through very simple means. By some mysterious scholastic agency, presumably not their own, they discover that the Hellenic equivalents for two or three suitable English words bearing upon the subject, welded together in happy union, combine to form the wondrous kalagathokephalon which may be obtained of all respectable perfumers and chemists, price ten-and-sixpence per bottle, none being genuine without the maker's label, to imitate which is forgery. Can it be possible that the gentlemen who devote their lives to the outside adornment of the heads of mankind find time to so far cultivate the insides of their own, that they can of themselves enrich the language with new choice compound appellatives coined from the language of Homer? Or are there amongst the complex mysteries of modern trade, professional lotion and hair-wash christeners?—broken-down scholars, maybe, who supply these high-sounding names at a guinea a title. One can imagine the title-coiner gazing at the embodiment of his labours, displayed in Mr. Truefitt's or Mr. Douglas's shop-window, with much the same queer feeling that prompted poor Goldsmith to steal out at night, and listen to the shabby rascals singing the songs which he had written for them at five shillings apiece.

One phase of the great nomenclature question I confess fairly baffles me. I do not use the word 'difficulty' here, as I imagine it would be misplaced. Where do sporting gentlemen contrive to

find the names which they bestow upon their dogs and horses? Some system there is of course, but what it can be seems inscrutable. In looking over the account given by a sporting paper of a recent coursing meeting, I notice, for example, the following names, taken almost at random: Mrs. Cockey, Slate Dresser, Racing Hopfactor, Ah! again, Iceboat, Imperence, Veiled Prophet, Birch Besom, Bab at the Bowster, Blood Serpent, Jolly Green. The effect is bewildering. What principle of unnatural selection could combine to name three unfortunate greyhounds, so much alike that no outsider could distinguish them from each other, by such uncanny uncanine names as Mrs. Cockey, Veiled Prophet, and Blood Serpent?

Take another entry, as mysterious to the uninitiated as an arrow-headed inscription: 'Earl of ——'s r. or f. b. Soapsuds, by Speculation—Slowworm.' One gathers that Speculation and Slowworm were the immediate progenitors of the r. or f. b. Soapsuds, and that all three names have the same initial letter, which proves the presence of system; but one would be glad to have an opportunity of ascertaining from the noble earl why a poor innocent little puppy that could never do him any harm should be condemned to bear through life so nasty an appellation, when there must be so many nice and pretty ones available.

If any one had informed me when I sat down to write this paper that I should have dragged the r. or f. b. Soapsuds into the question, an animal of whose existence I was not aware five minutes ago, I should have considered the statement erratic, to say no more. But it has nevertheless become an accomplished fact, and as the quadruped has found its way amongst us, I will make so bold as to detain it a moment longer. The unsavoury Soapsuds, I observe, was beaten by Progress, which sounds all very right and proper, but far be it from me to draw any inference derogatory to the noble earl's defeated champion. It ran its hardest and did its best, no doubt, allowing no considerations of name or other paltry influences to prevent its straining every nerve for victory. It would have done no better had it been christened Blue Bell, or Rattler, or Lily Queen, or any other euphonious name. Its unfortunate appellation had to be taken for granted, and made no iota of difference in its performance. And now, Soapsuds, having so strangely turned up to provide a text, off you go, good dog; good-bye, and better luck next time. And the text, as our fleet-footed friend was intended to show, is that, after all, the question of nomenclature is of the slightest possible importance. Let me take a few examples, confining myself to literature. What, at first sight, would appear more fatal to the success of a comedy than to bestow upon it so haphazard and unmeaning a title as *Twelfth Night, or What you Will?* How insane we should think any author nowadays who, having written an

elaborate novel, proposed to christen both hero and book *Tom Jones*. And yet they both live. A diamond is a diamond still, though wrapped up in calico or brown paper. In the case of the comedy, I possess my own little personal theory, which owns the same birthplace as the philosopher's camel, and acknowledge to my strongest belief in its absolute correctness. Imagine the scene. Printer knocks at the greenroom door of the Globe Theatre. 'Come in!' growls a voice. Enter printer with MS. 'O, Mr. Shakespeare, don't put me off again. Here's your new play to be brought out next week and a copy must be printed for our Royal Lady, who has promised her gracious presence. It's all ready but the title, and this is the twelfth night I have been hanging about the entrances and behind the scenes to crave your attention.' 'Then Twelfth Night let it be, or what you like, i' faith; so that weighty matter's off our hands,' says smiling Mr. Shakespeare, with his kingly scorn for trifles. Off goes the happy craftsman, who remembers his instructions so well that *Twelfth Night, or What you Will*, becomes the title that we now conceive as the only fitting one.

Do you remember old Caxton's groans over the 'unlucky anachronism' Pisistratus, his son, so christened through his own unwitting fatherly suggestion? Yet in a few years' time he was so entirely reconciled to it, that no Austin or Roland in its place would have seemed possible. The fact is we grow to our names as the hermit crab grows to its shell, and, following out the same example, can change if necessary, and soon lose all feeling of strangeness and embarrassment. Address Mrs. Ferdinand Lovibond as Miss Jenny Singleton, which was her rightful title six months ago, and she will look puzzled. She will probably have to think twice before she remembers to whom you are alluding.

And this most useful faculty of adaptability which grows upon us so quickly goes far, I think, to explain the titles which just at present lady novelists are so fond of adopting. They read very queerly at first, though. Take a sample: 'Now ready, in three vols., at all the libraries, *Lieth Down like a Lamb*. By the authoress of *Adieu for Evermore, my Love*.' One gets accustomed to even this in time, and I have no doubt that, from the first, such designations appear perfectly natural and proper to the young ladies who adopt them, though I confess I even prefer *Tom Jones*, with all its horrible, unpromising, uncompromising plainness. Why should not *Lieth Down as a Lamb* do as well as anything else—or, let us say, better? The first word implies fiction; lamb suggests mint-sauce—mint, herbs—herbs, flowers—flowers, nature—nature, mankind—mankind, the world. The world of fiction! What could be more appropriate?

WALTER SIMMS.

THE TWO INQUESTS

IN TWO PARTS

PART II.

'A SPIRIT PASSED BEFORE MY FACE: THE HAIR OF MY FLESH STOOD UP.'

CHAPTER I. DEEPENING SHADOWS.

ls I draw near the crisis of my history I feel a growing repug-
ance to trace the opposing feelings which struggled for mastery
ithin me. I shall confine myself to the facts, as they stand out
learly and for ever in my memory. The voice which I had heard,
d which was no dream utterance, had come to me at midnight on
riday the 10th of December, and I knew with a certainty no hu-
an reasoning could have shaken that the spirit of Amy Connor
d my husband were destined to meet again on the anniversary and
the hour of her death. Robert remained from home till late on
e succeeding day, and I was thankful to be alone; for strange to
y, I had a deeper consciousness of a spiritual presence when he
s within the house than during his absence. From the moment
t I heard those accents of doom I was sure that there was an in-
itable woe hanging over my husband's head. No human love or
e could avert it, and I almost feared even to pray for him while
remained so obstinately silent as to this dark secret.

On his return home, then, it did not either surprise or pain me
t he withdrew into the inner room, which had now become, in
mind, connected with the chain of circumstances leading on to
supreme event. But it was unusual, however, that he should
er his dinner to be served alone; and Simon's gloomy face, as he
l me of this arrangement, reminded me once more that this man
evidently knew much that had been studiously kept back from
. Deep silence seemed to reign over the house that night, un-
ken and ominous; and I would have gladly escaped retiring to
had it been possible, so much did I dread the solitude of my
room. As it grew later my nerves were more and more ex-
d, and I started as the ashes fell from the fire or the branches
he rose-tree tapped against the window. It was nearly twelve
ock when there came a rap at the door. I said, 'Come in,' in
esitating voice, and Mrs. Judson's pale face presented itself.

'I hope, ma'am, you are not going to sit up and wait for mas-
; when once he begins to write late at night I know he'll forget
about the hour; and you look ill and tired, and really, ma'am,
must take more care of yourself.'

I felt grateful to her, for there was a feeling of security in her presence, and, indeed, I had always noticed from the very first a look of kindly interest in her eyes. I rose up, closed my book, of which I had read but little, and went up-stairs to my room.

The woman closed the door after me carefully, and listened for a few seconds before she came up to the fire, near to which I had seated myself. All was silent, and as if reassured, she said,

'Has master told you that he shall be leaving Overton very soon?'

I said yes, and that I was very thankful for it.

'This house,' she continued, 'is not a fit place for a young wife, and I've seen you growing weaker and thinner every day, ma'am, and have felt for you; for no one can bear such loneliness without losing heart and spirit; and I wonder how I've managed to stand it like I have, though I have seen more of the troubles of this world than you have, and have no reason to look for any happiness now.'

Her tone was bitter, but still there was a good deal of pity in her look, and it encouraged me to say,

'I wish you'd tell me more about Miss Connor.'

The change I had noticed before when Amy Connor was mentioned again passed over her face.

'Not to-night,' she said. 'If I ever talk to you about her, it must be in the daytime when the sun is shining. I couldn't bear it at night, and so near *her* room too.' Then bending over me she said in a whisper, 'D'ye know that she must have hidden herself in this room on the night she killed herself?' I shuddered, and rose up with the wild intention of seeking Robert, and asking him to take me at once out of this haunted and miserable house; but Mrs. Judson laid her hand on my shoulder, and said, 'Don't betray me, ma'am. You don't know what you might draw down on your head if you speak to Doctor Connor; and *you* have no cause for fear, ma'am; there are always angels round the innocent. You can lie down in peace; and if you feel afraid of being alone, I will sit by you quietly till Doctor Connor comes up; but I mustn't talk to you, ma'am—'tis bad for us both.'

She turned away, and began to arrange the things on the dressing-table.

I went to bed with the somewhat childish idea of keeping her with me till the hour of one had passed, and accordingly lengthened out my preparations for the night as much as possible. As soon as I retired to bed Mrs. Judson took a book, and sat still as a statue, reading to herself. Tired of gazing at her, my eyelids involuntarily closed, and I fell asleep before the church clock had struck the first hour of morning. I do not know how long this first sleep lasted; but when I woke the room was perfectly dark. I extended my hand, and felt that the bed was still vacant. I struck a light

hastily, and found to my surprise that it was five o'clock. Glad that morning was approaching, and with a relieved feeling that I had been left alone—for, as I have said before, I was more conscious of a mysterious dread when he was with me—I turned on my pillow and fell asleep again. This sort of day and night was repeated up to Thursday; I only saw my husband at intervals, and then but for a few minutes. His look was increasingly wild, and though his manner was quiet and his words tender and considerate, he was evidently under the pressure of strong mental agitation. Whenever he spoke to me, it was as if he had to call his thoughts from some subject that engrossed them, and at times I could see his lips move, though no words proceeded from his mouth. I made several attempts to remonstrate with him, and to conjure him to let me be with him and comfort him. On that Thursday when he returned home he came into the room, and throwing off his greatcoat, laid himself down on the sofa, asking me to sit by him.

'Put your hand on my head, and cool it if you can; for I am sick, sad, and tired.'

My heart yearned to him as of old, and all my love welled up again.

'O, Robert,' I cried, 'I would die to comfort you!'

He repeated the word 'comfort' slowly to himself, and lay with musing eye gazing at the fire.

To any one who had entered the room it would have presented a scene of home-like happiness. I see him now with those sad expressive eyes, and with the lines of sorrow prematurely marked upon his forehead. What was I, ignorant girl, that I should presume to judge my husband? I am very thankful now that that evening was one of quiet peace and love. If he had deep forebodings, they were hidden from me. He had the manner of one about to embark on a long voyage, and who studies to keep back all mention of his approaching separation to save the grief of hearts he loves.

That night he slept by my side—a deep untroubled slumber. I passed the greater part of the night waking and praying, and the gray morning of the 17th December broke upon the monotonous round of our life with no added presage of the coming tempest.

Chapter II.

AMY'S ROOM.

I wondered a good deal if my husband would leave the house on this 17th of December—this melancholy day!—and I tried in many ways to engage his attention after breakfast; and at length, when I saw him get up and prepare to go out, I asked him plainly to stay with me throughout the day.

'It is impossible,' he said. 'I have an engagement I could not break. I *must* see Carwithen; so do not be frightened if I am not back till late to-night.'

As he spoke the gig came to the door, and to my surprise I saw Simon seated in it, evidently about to accompany Robert. This was the only instance on which I had seen him go out, his usual employment being in the garden; and I had always felt glad that my husband seldom held any communication with this man. I went with Robert to the door, and stood on the step, giving him his driving gloves. He usually made a point of avoiding all outward signs of affection before the servants; but to-day, as he was turning to step into the gig, a sudden thought or impulse seemed to strike him and as I was still standing at the hall-door, he came back and pressed me warmly to him, saying in a thick voice:

'God will take care of you, Georgie!'

Before I had time to answer him he had jumped in and drove rapidly away.

I went back into the house, and paced restlessly about the room unable to calm myself. I went up-stairs to put my walking-things on, determined to try and walk off my uneasiness. Hardly forming any definite purpose, I found myself in the streets of Overton. There had been an early service, and the people were coming out of church. I walked into the churchyard, and straight up to the grave whose tenant had now become the great object of all my doubts and fears. Yes, I had not been mistaken in the date on the tombstone it was this day of the month, the 17th of December 1844. I stood at once enthralled by the multitude of conjectures that came rushing into my mind; and should have remained there, no doubt much longer if I had not been aroused to visible things by a strange voice saying:

'Mrs. Connor, they are going to lock the churchyard-gate.'

I turned, surprised at being addressed by name, and recognised the curate of the church. I followed him quietly as he left the churchyard, and as he locked the gates after us he looked up at the leaden sky, which was low and heavy.

'We shall have a stormy night,' he said.

I felt a mocking bitterness at my heart, thinking how little this man knew of my anticipations of all connected with this night of which he spoke so quietly. He was a plain middle-aged man, and I felt no hesitation in accepting his proffered arm. We crossed the market-place in silence, but he said, as we were passing Mrs. Piggott's door:

'There is some one looking out for you at that window.'

I looked up and saw Mrs. Piggott's kind face, warm with smiles of welcome, while she kissed her hand to me, and beckoned me to come in; but I shook my head, though I returned her greeting with

equal warmth. It was the first ray of human comfort that had reached me for many a day. As I raised my veil to look up at the kind old lady, I noticed the clergyman give a half exclamation of surprise; it was explained soon after, and I took no heed of it at the time. The long street that led from the market-place was ill-paved; and as I walked along I became conscious how really weak I was, and once or twice almost tottered. Mr. Lambert begged me to lean upon his arm, adding:

'I have a daughter nearly as old as you are, Mrs. Connor, and you need not hesitate.'

I thanked him, for any sympathy now was very precious to me; and I walked very slowly on, desiring to put off as long as possible the return to the shadow of that wretched home. Mr. Lambert began to speak of Mrs. Piggott, of her goodness and readiness to relieve and pity all who suffered.

'You cannot have a safer or a better friend,' he said. 'I wish we saw you more frequently in Overton; if you will honour me by calling on my daughter—for I have no wife living—she will be most happy to offer you any attentions in her power; but she is too young to pay visits herself.'

From this he diverged to remarks on the neighbourhood and certain places worthy of a visit.

'Of course you have seen Carwithen Castle?' he said.

'No,' I answered reluctantly.

'Is it possible? Why, Dr. Connor is the most intimate friend that Lord Carwithen has, and it is but nine miles from your door.'

I said I knew this, and, with jealous fear lest any doubt of my husband's kindness should occur to Mr. Lambert, added: 'My husband is too much occupied to take me out driving at present, but I hope ere long to see the castle, and become acquainted with Lord Carwithen.'

'I should have thought you were not only acquainted but related to him,' he said. 'I had no idea, till you raised your veil just now, how like you are to poor Lady Olive Mayne, who died a year and a half ago.'

'I have been told of the likeness,' I replied. 'Did you know her?'

'Yes; she often referred to me, desiring to know all cases of distress in Overton, and her purse and influence were ever at my command. She was a very angelic being, and her brother has never recovered her loss.'

I thought of another brother and sister whose history was a dismal parallel to this noble and excellent one. Although I have said I would not speak of my own feelings during this terrible time, I must note here that two separate natures seemed within me during these few days. The struggle between good and evil that goes on

in all human beings is not what I mean; with me it was another contest between my reasoning powers and wild impulses, amounting almost to madness, which prompted me to ask questions of the merest stranger, and to throw myself on the mercy and pity of any one who would listen to me. I had to struggle hard against this feeling now, for I knew the *real fear* that had haunted me throughout these weeks since Lawyer Piggott's first disclosure was the awful thought that Amy Connor *had not died by her own hand*. And since the night of that spirit warning that fear had deepened into almost certainty, heightened by the horrible thought that I knew the author. I conquered the impulse, but Mr. Lambert went on:

'May I, as a father, give you a little advice? I cannot help thinking that you are nourishing and dwelling on many sorrowful thoughts. Pray make a vigorous effort to be cheerful; avoid lonely musings, which can lead to no happy result; come among your neighbours at Overton. Mrs. Piggott's and my own house will be always open to you; and assure Dr. Connor that it is my earnest wish to cultivate friendly relations with him. I cannot bear that he should live in this isolated manner, and his very uncommon talents should not be suffered to go to rust when they might be so useful to his fellow-creatures.'

O, how my heart bled as I heard these words, and felt that happiness might have been attainable, but that now it was too late!

I could only thank him, and promise to give his message to my husband; and now we were close to my door; he shook my hand kindly and said:

'Do not let it be long before we meet again, Mrs. Connor; I shall come and find you out, if I do not soon see you under my own roof.'

I turned and entered my house. The door closed upon sympathy, life, and light, and I became again the prey of misery and fear. I ran up-stairs, and was astonished to see as I passed that the usually locked door of the front room was standing open. I went in, and found myself in a narrow passage, having a door on either hand; the one on the right was partly open, and it showed me a bedroom in no way different from an ordinary sleeping chamber. At the foot of the bed Mrs. Judson was kneeling down, with her head hidden in her hands. I walked in and put my hand upon her shoulder; she raised her face, swollen with weeping, and said:

'Look round, ma'am. Master has ordered that this room should be opened; and if you desired it, all should be shown to you. This is *her* bed; in that drawer you will find the dress she wore on the night of her death.'

I went to a heavy old-fashioned chest of drawers, and opening

the top one, saw a torn yellow lace veil, which I recognised at once, and an old white dress. I looked at them with amazement and sorrow.

'She often put them on,' said Mrs. Judson, 'and she sat in them talking about her wedding-day; and master never crossed her in her fancies.'

'Was she ever married, then?' I asked.

Mrs. Judson stared at me for a moment or two, and then said:

'You must ask master everything; things will be different now. He has only told me to let you into these rooms.'

'Where did you sleep,' I asked, 'when Miss Connor was alive?'

'In the room on the other side of the little passage; there is a door out of that leading up to the room where I now sleep.'

I looked round and marked a few books, dusty with long disuse, and a few common articles of daily use, a workbox, and old desk without a lock and stained with ink.

'Did she ever write?' I asked.

Mrs. Judson coloured, changed most painfully, as if the question struck on some very sensitive chord of her memory.

'Yes,' she said in a hollow voice. 'Do you wish to stay any longer, ma'am? I must leave you; the room is too sad for *me;* I cannot bear it.'

I replied that I should feel comforted by remaining, and that she need not mind leaving me alone. In truth, being face to face now with the reality of these mysterious rooms was doing me good, and restoring the balance of my imagination. I sat down and took the desk, opening each part of it, and looking with keen interest at any evidence of the poor little hand that had once used it. There were some old pieces of blotting-paper, but I could detect no words, except in one corner, where I made out husband, husband, husband, written a great number of times over. I linked this naturally with the idea which I had been told haunted the poor girl's mind; and coupling it with Mrs. Judson's mention of her having often put on the white gown, thought I discerned clearly the circumstances that must have led to Amy Connor's insanity. Probably she had been engaged to be married, her brother had disapproved of it, and broken it off perhaps, even at the last moment, when the dress had been purchased.

So, sitting there in the approaching twilight, I eagerly grasped at these saner thoughts, and resumed again trust and belief in my husband's honour.

Chapter III.

THE SUMMONS ANSWERED.

Thus absorbed as I had been in tracing out the shadow pictures of Amy Connor's history, I had not remarked the gathering darkness of the winter evening. Suddenly it seemed to me that the blackness of the night swallowed up the landscape without. I woke up from my reverie, feeling the same thrill of fear that had crept over me a week ago. I rose hastily, closed the desk, and rushed out of the prison-chamber into my own room. As I caught sight of my face in the glass I was startled by the gleaming terror in the eyes, and turned away wringing my hands, I remember, and crying out, 'O, when will this night be over?' I wrapped myself in a large white shawl, one of the relics of my bridal tour, and went down to the warmer and more cheerful air of the drawing-room. I do not think I have mentioned that the room which looked upon the garden had a door of communication with another of which one of the windows faced the street. There was a lamp-post within a few feet of the door, and just as I came down the man had lit it. Every gleam of light seemed reassuring, for 'a horror of thick darkness' had fallen upon me. I opened the door between the rooms and paced backwards and forwards, occasionally stopping to look at the little circle of light made by the lamp on the road. An old elm-tree and three or four poplars stood on the other side, and I had noticed that these trees seemed prophets of coming storms. The elm creaked and the poplar shivered; these signs were soon followed by one or two blasts of fitful wind, then a wild rush of rain, and the storm set in in its power and majesty. The house seemed to rock with the violence of the wind; but I was glad of the noise of the tempest, for it seemed to swallow up the superstitious fear and to speak of the might of the Hand that was ruling over all our destinies. And thus, sometimes sitting by the fire in the inner room, at others standing at the window and listening to the various changes of the storm, the slow hours crept on.

It was nearly eight o'clock before I was interrupted by Mrs. Judson's entrance. She came and begged me to have some food, reminding me that I had tasted nothing since the morning.

'You will not think, ma'am,' she said, 'of waiting dinner; the doctor will not be home for hours to come. Pray let me bring you something here by the fire.'

I said I would have some tea, which she brought me, and tried to tempt me to eat something, but in vain; I felt I could not swallow or bear the sight of anything to eat. All my anxiety now centred itself in the approach of the midnight hour, for I had an inward certainty that between twelve and one my husband would

again meet the accusing spirit who had summoned him, and that I should not see him until that dreadful moment was over. Once or twice in the pauses of the wild tumult without, I thought I heard again that sorrowful voice, but I knew this to be the excited action of my own mind and brain, and I resolutely struggled against it. In truth, as the night went on, I grew much calmer and obtained more mastery over my own terror. Each time that Mrs. Judson came in, she, on the contrary, grew more and more excited and wild. She said broken words whose meaning I failed to make out, frequently gazed at the clock, as if she too was waiting anxiously for an appointed hour. Shortly after eleven the wind gradually lulled, and as the sky grew lighter I could see the ragged edges of the fast-sailing clouds, and at last a misty ray or two of the rising moon. I stood marking the passing clouds, bound, almost against my will, to keep this solitary vigil. As I still stood gazing from the window, the Overton clock struck twelve, and as the last stroke died on the night, Mrs. Judson called to me from the other room:

'Mrs. Connor, come here and read this letter. I could hardly bear to keep it back, but your husband charged me not to give it you till after twelve to-night. May God keep your heart from breaking; you have a hard trial to go through!'

She handed me a letter as she spoke directed in my husband's hand; it was dated on the morning of the day just passed; the lines were few, but they contained the secret of his life.

'My dearly-loved and honoured Wife,—To-night will end your misery and break the chain which I was mad enough to bind around you. A week ago I dreamt that I might fly with you to a foreign land, and leave my guilt and shame buried in Amy's grave. It might not be! On that night she woke me from my dream and summoned me to meet her. I have read all your heart clearly for weeks past. I know its pangs of doubt, its growing belief that I was the murderer of my sister. But my crime was yet deeper and more deadly; for I was the husband and not the brother of Amy Connor; and though I did not give her the poison that killed her, I drove her mad by long months of cruel wrong and base deceit. She was a friendless child brought up in my father's house, and treated by me as a little sister. When he died, and I changed my whole course of life and entered the army, I committed her to the care of Martha Judson, and from time to time I used to see her and caress her with a brother's protecting affection. Alas, as she grew up she mistook these marks of interest for a more romantic passion. She was but sixteen when I returned to London, and broke with all my hopes and aspirations connected with Olive Mayne. Despairing and alone, I went to Martha's little home. Amy showed me all her girlish love without an attempt to hide it. Desperate,

hopeless, half bewildered with my ruined fate, I felt as if it were my duty to marry this orphan child, for she was little more. She loved me devotedly, but her mind was weak and frivolous, and I found my compassion quickly giving place to weariness and contempt. She became a mother, and while her child lived she was content, and did not mark my growing coldness and neglect. But when the little one died she sank into despondency, broken at times by fits of wild excitement. Love might yet have saved her, but I had none to give; and during this time of darkness I met again with Olive's brother. Now began my downward course. I yielded, after a brief struggle, to the fatal temptation of passing the last months of Olive's life by her side. I dared not reveal to her that I had a broken-hearted wife at home. I told my trusting friend that my father had committed a step-sister to my care—that she was insane, and could not be left in London without my personal protection. He proposed to give me the Moor House, and I consented to place her there under her kind servant's care. I told all to Martha and Simon, and besought them to aid me in concealing my real relationship to Amy. I lived at Carwithen until Olive died, and during that time Amy was calmer; but when I came back to my miserable home my presence seemed to drive her into more dangerous madness. Twice she escaped restraint, her desires being fixed on making my deceit known; for, with the strange intuition of lunacy, she had found out my hypocrisy. On the last dreadful night I had been haunted by a diabolical impulse to leave the means of self-destruction in her power; but I resisted, and fled as if from a personal encounter with Satan himself, leaving the phial in Simon's hands. I think he detected with a sort of magnetic sympathy the fiendish purpose I had longed but feared to accomplish. From that hour I have felt I was in his power, and have dreaded his glance. But Amy's death was by her own act alone, and Martha Judson, who loved her fondly, was the innocent instrument. I have one more task to do. I go to tell my friend in how dishonoured a wretch he has trusted. Amy has summoned me, and I know that I must meet her. God's hand is on me; the hour of expiation has come. It will not need any act of my own to end my disgraced life. I have not slept for many nights; but last night a deep sleep fell on me, and something like a hope of pardon came, for Amy looked on me with pity in her eyes. Once more I shall see her before the end. Farewell, dear wife. Live on, and forget the dark days you have spent with me. My second Olive, my pure, my beautiful one, God give you a happier fate when I am gone! Farewell.

Your loving guilty husband,

'ROBERT CONNOR.'

I read this letter through in perfect stillness. No tears came.

knew that all my husband wrote was waking truth, not the raving a superstitious maniac, as it might have seemed to some.

Had not I also heard his summons? Did not my own consciousess bear witness to all that he had written? Slowly I sank on my ees, and laying down my head on the open letter, I tried to plead r him, for I knew that even now the hour of doom had come. y companion knelt down by me, and I heard her quick breathing d stifled sob close to my side. I remained mute and motionless; ine was an anguish far greater than sorrow. No weeping could lieve it. No cries. No prayers. A sense of awe stole over me, d again the icy chill of the grave crept through every nerve. his life and the visible world seemed annihilated. I felt as if I d passed out of this mortal state and had entered into the abode spirits. I should have knelt on for hours unconscious of time or any passing circumstance; but even in this trance of awe my uses remained acutely awake to all that could affect my husband's te.

Suddenly, far, far in the distance I caught the rapid beat of a orse's hoofs. I started to my feet and grasped Mrs. Judson's m, shrieking out, 'He is coming! O God, he is coming!' I n out into the passage, and with my weak hands tried to unlock e heavy fastenings of the door. Mrs. Judson followed me, and, th her aid, we soon stood together on the steps looking towards e turn of the road, towards Ambledon, watching for the coming of e rapidly approaching horse. And now plainly in the stillness of e night we heard wheels also. The clouds had parted, and the oon looked down on us like a reproachful face, pale and blurted th tears. O those moments!

Onward and onward, nearer and nearer, came the sounds; and now mad career, almost upsetting the gig as it swung round the sharp n of the road, came rushing forward the frightened horse. Be-e I could draw back within the doorway he had stopped with such ldenness as to throw Simon out on the road, and then stood perfly still, shaking violently as if palsied with terror. Even in my n agony I noticed the strange tremor of the poor dumb beast. husband? Yes, he was there—he was living—he had come k to me—he would yet be spared; the dead wife had not claimed n. O, there might still be hope for us both! He was sitting ight on the driving seat of the gig—the sudden shock had not placed him; his hat was off, and his white face gleamed in the onlight.

His eyes were fixed steadfastly as if in catalepsy, and his whole ly looked rigid as a statue. He slowly left his seat, and one one, as if he walked in chains and was heavily laden, he ascended steps to the door, passing close as I stood gazing on him. ll I ever cease to see that face of death in life—the stony horror

of those unmoving eyes? Frozen with fear I stood. I could not move; I could not speak; could only mark all I have noted down; and beyond and above all I had an awful sense that there was one who drew him on to the end, and that the living wife was powerless in the presence of the injured spirit of Amy Connor. He passed out of my sight through the open door into the dispensary, and I heard him enter the inner room and close the door behind him. As the key turned harshly in the lock I regained my suspended energies, and flew rather than ran up to the closed door, vainly trying to turn the handle and to enter with him. If Death were there I desired to face the solemn presence, and to share the last conflict with my husband. It was in vain I threw myself on the ground by the door. I prayed and wept and called, and wrung my hands; I adjured him by every fond name, by every hope of heaven, to let me comfort and sustain him to the last. But the senseless wood that separated me from him was not more dumb than he. There was no voice in answer—no utterance save one or two gasping sounds. Once I distinguished the sound of something like the opening of a drawer and the moving of some papers; then all was profoundly still. My passionate grief spent itself, and I lay exhausted, and, as I thought, almost dying on the ground. My whole mind was so full of impressions from the unseen world that I expected some supernatural occurrence, and despaired of any human aid. As I lay, cold and half senseless, I heard the stir of a sudden arrival, and voices in earnest question and reply, but it seemed far off as in a dream, and I took no note of it; all the powers of my soul were fixed on what was passing in that inner room. But gently, as a mother would touch a frightened child, I felt myself drawn away from the door, and a face full of deep pity bent down over me. My own eyes were raised to this strange face with despairing entreaty; but from this point all memory ceased—darkness and night closed on me. My life was suspended for many weeks. I cannot write the end; it was accomplished on that night. Before the first hour of dawn the spirit of Robert Connor had passed away to join the wife he had so deeply injured. In that far land where eternal forgiveness dwells may she not have met him with a smile of peace?

Mrs. Connor's manuscript breaks off abruptly at this point; but the friend who permitted us to copy the above furnished us subsequently with an extract from a local paper which elucidates in some degree the circumstances of Dr. Connor's death, though it leaves much still shrouded in mystery.

Extract from the Ambledon Courier, December 23, 1845.

Mysterious Death of Doctor Connor.—On Saturday last, the 18th inst., an inquest was held at the Moor House, Overton,

by, del.

Edmund Evans, sc.

THE HOUR OF DOOM.

n the body of Dr. Robert Connor, who was well known as physician nd general practitioner. The inquiry was conducted in a strictly rivate manner, but some particulars have crept out, and we are llowed to publish the following outline of the evidence then given. The body, which lay in a small room leading out of the dispensary, presented the appearance of death from exhaustion; in the right hand a letter was tightly grasped, and an open bureau strewn with torn letters stood near the corpse; it would appear that the deceased must have been occupied in seeking for something within it when death overtook him. On the bureau lay a miniature of a young lady, a wedding ring, a certificate of marriage duly witnessed and signed, and a quantity of fair hair wrapped in silver paper. After viewing the body, the coroner (Archibald Piggott, Esq., of Overton) proceeded with the inquiry.

A careful examination was made by Dr. Sandon of Ambledon, and Mr. Carter of the infirmary, but no traces of poison could be detected. They were of opinion that death was caused by strong excitement acting on an exhausted frame, and the rupture of a small vessel in the brain.

The evidence of Simon Judson was then taken. He deposed that Dr. Connor had been absent from his house on that morning from ten o'clock till half-past twelve on the same night. He had accompanied his master on that day, and had observed that he was in evident excitement; that he drove unusually fast and nearly upset the gig two or three times in driving through Ambledon streets, which were crowded, being market-day. After visiting the infirmary the doctor went on a mile farther, to the Union Workhouse, where he had a private room, in which he frequently wrote letters when not engaged among his patients. On this day he remained alone until after nine o'clock in the evening, the matron going up several times to beg him to take some refreshment. He left the Union at half-past nine, and drove through the pouring rain to Carwithen Castle, a distance of seven miles and a half. He was silent the whole time, and never answered when spoken to once or twice. On reaching the castle he flung the reins to Simon, desiring him to bring the gig round in an hour. About eleven the doctor came out to the stable yard, where he was harnessing the horse, took his seat, and drove off. Simon observed that he looked very , and stumbled as if he were blind and could not see the gig-ep. He allowed the horse to go his own pace, and seemed quite lost. Simon thought he was faint and sick with fasting, d tried to take the reins, but his master shook his head, and ould not give them up. As they passed through Ambledon the ocks were striking twelve. The moon had come out, and they uld see the road plainly before them. There was a turning after e turnpike gate which led over a rough road across the moor, to

didn't strike him then, but kept staring at the hedge, wh
quite bare of leaves, so that you could see the field by glimp
yond it. They hadn't sat above a minute before Simon saw
thing white come creeping up on the field side of the hedg
when it came up to the gate he saw it was a woman. He cri
'Lord, save us; it's a spirit!' It came slowly on through th
and stood on the road within a yard or two of the wheel. I
her quite clearly; and, if he had not known her to be dead, he
have sworn that it was Amy Connor, just as she looked the
before she died, in a white gown and veil, with bare arms and
and her face very pale and dreadful. She didn't look angr
beckoned with her hand, and moved her head slowly. The
didn't seem to be there more than a minute or two, but Sim
very much frightened, and hid his eyes, and tried to jump out
gig, but the horse started suddenly and rushed on at a he
rate, and never stopped till they were at their own door, w
was flung out, and stunned by the shock, and remembered n
clearly till Lord Carwithen came to him in the kitchen and
him to help him break open his master's door.

The man was much affected during the relation of this s
history, and though narrowly questioned, never varied in one t
his evidence.

The Earl of Carwithen was then called; his agitation w
treme, as he had been the most intimate friend of the de
It appeared he did not learn the fact of the doctor's first m
until the night of the 17th, when Dr. Connor entered his
unannounced, and during a most painful interview made a
velation of all the facts of his previous history. The Earl d
entering on these as they were in some measure connected w

her husband's room; he carried her up to bed, and proceeded with Simon's assistance to break open the door. He found the doctor dead, stretched on the ground by the side of an open bureau, with a letter clenched in his hand!

This letter was handed to the coroner, and, as it was directed to him, he read it in silence. We understand that the letter was written by the deceased's first wife, Amy Connor, who had always passed in the neighbourhood as his sister. It was dated on the night she destroyed herself, and contained an accusation against her husband, and an appeal to Mr. Piggott to save any woman whom Dr. Connor might marry from a fate like her own.

The body of Dr. Connor is to be interred on Friday the 24th, and the Earl of Carwithen has directed that it shall be buried by the side of his first wife at Overton. The verdict, we need hardly say, was 'Died by the visitation of God.'

A profound gloom has been spread in the neighbourhood by this event. The young widow, a lady of great beauty and excellence, was conveyed to the house of Mrs. Piggott of Overton immediately after the inquest. We hear that little hope is entertained of her recovery, as she has not regained her consciousness since the event.

L'Envoi.

Fourteen years had passed since the strange circumstances attendant on Dr. Connor's death had filled the neighbourhood with wonder and curiosity. These sensations had slowly died out, and there remained no visible witnesses of the past, only the two plain crosses that marked the graves of Dr. Connor and his first wife. It was Christmas-eve, and the afternoon services had just ended; an old lady, leaning on a silver-headed stick, came feebly out of the porch and walked up to these graves. She stood quietly looking down at them for some moments, then bent a steadfast gaze on the evening sky, and turning slowly away she crossed the market-place and entered her own door. It was Mrs. Piggott. She had nursed with the most devoted care the poor desolate widow through the long illness which followed her husband's death. On her recovery Mrs. Connor had left the neighbourhood, and had only been heard of at intervals. The Moor House had been razed to the ground, by the orders of the owner, Lord Carwithen. The Earl himself had quitted the castle, and it was reported that he had gone to the East. The castle had been shut up for years and the servants discharged. Mrs. Judson had been appointed one of the lodge-keepers, and was given a special charge to attend to the wants of the sick and old on the estate. Simon had disappeared, and nothing was known of his fate. Mrs. Piggott entered her house, filled with sad reminiscences of the past; she went languidly up-stairs, and sank down in a chair by the fire. By her side was a little table, and on

it lay a foreign letter in its narrow envelope; she took it up a
started as she noticed the somewhat peculiar hand. We cann
wind up this dark story better than by glancing over her should
as she reads. It is like the light of sunset which Mrs. Piggott sa
a while ago as she stood over the graves in the silent churchyard.

Lady Carwithen to Mrs. Piggott.

'Mentone, Dec. 17, 1859.

'My dear old Friend,—I will not ask if you still remember m
I know you do. Such goodness as yours does not forget, and I ha
a place in your heart, because you took me in and saved me wh
I was well-nigh lost in my despair. This is the anniversary of
first husband's death. I can think of it now without a shudd
and can bless God that he was taken away by the Divine hand, a
not allowed to rush uncalled into the presence of his Maker.
have always believed that his expiation was accepted, and that A
has his love now in that abode where there is no marrying or givi
in marriage. You will want to know if I am happy. Yes, de
friend, the dark sorrows of my early life have passed like th
storms of the morning, and have given place to a later day of seren
peace. I will not call it joy, for it is too deep and quiet for that
We love each other so entirely that the remembrance of past grie
and sin does not embitter our happiness. Would you ask wh
has wrought this change in my life? It is he who, like myself, once
loved and trusted Robert Connor. The rude shock to his belief in
his friend's truth drove him from his home an embittered man; he
travelled through many lands, and three years ago retraced his steps
towards England. Lingering at St. Remo, he fell in love with its
beauty, and finally bought a château on the winding coast, where he
soon made himself beloved by the simple people. In the autumn o
that same year I came here with a dying cousin. It was my onl
comfort then to try and soothe her sufferings. She lingered on t
the spring, but before it came I had found a nearer and dearer on
to replace her. Lord Carwithen, hearing of a dying lady in th
hotel, entreated us to look on his house as our own, and placed a
its English comforts at our disposal. I need not dwell on the pa
ticulars of our mutual attachment and marriage. My husband
recovering strength and cheerfulness, and courage to meet all h
duties again as an English nobleman. We talk now of revisiti
Carwithen Castle next summer. I shall bring with me a boy wh
is the delight and pride of our existence. Remember me to yo
son and good Mr. Lambert, and, lastly, give my love to Mrs. Ju
son. I have never forgotten her sympathy for me. God bless yo
my dear old friend! I look forward to our meeting with the greate
joy. Your loving and grateful

'GEORGINA CARWITHEN.'

NEW-YEAR'S DAY IN THE COUNTRY

'I WONDER if I shall have a cut at any of that game to night?' Thus Mr. John Halton communing with himself on the outside of the old mail-coach which eked out a precarious existence in a country throughout which railroads were as yet but scantily dispersed. 'Two to one I have a slice of that pheasant, and it shall go hard but a portion of that hare finds its way to my platter before to-morrow morning.'

It was a tolerably safe bet on Mr. Halton's part; and as nobody overheard his vain-glorious boast, there was no fear of its being snapped up on the extremely off-chance that he would not win. As he was journeying to a part of the country where eligible young men were even more than usually scarce, and as dinner-parties of any pretensions were very few and far between, he could calculate to the nicety of half a dozen or so of houses at which game was likely to grace the festive board, and he could make his dispositions and arrangements in accordance with that knowledge.

'Let's have the ribbons, Harry,' says he. 'I want to get down in time to see the hounds throw off, and we shall never do it at this rate. This is a short stage, isn't it? We ought to be making the running here.'

He was right, and Harry, prince of modern Jehus, was nothing loth to indulge so liberal a 'tip' with the tooling of the team over the shortest stage and best bit of road of the journey. The contractors who horsed the mail—wiser in their generation than their brethren of the tramways—had furnished some corky old thoroughbreds for the short stage, and as they could gallop 'above a bit,' as the coachman phrased it, there were worse bits of enjoyment for a young sportsman than 'tooling the team' over this part of the road. Wind-broken, spavined, and foundered old screws they were certainly; but they had some blood in their old carcasses, and when they grew warm to their work they would make the mile-stones fly past them like the light. They would throw the mud after them too in a most impartial manner, and Mr. Halton had a magnificent pair of spectacles in the shape of two mud-dabs in his eyes for his morning's freak. The old coach rocked and slewed in a highly dangerous manner under his management, and an old lady who had the whole of the inside to herself was in a state of awful trepidation when the machine pulled up, and she threatened all sorts of dire punishment upon the devoted head of the too-complacent coachman. But she was a veritable 'traveller,' nobody knew her on the road,

and Harry, on a promise that the rest of the journey should
managed by himself, was neither defrauded of his customary tip,
did he experience any ill-effects from the old lady's temporary wra
There was no difficulty in prevailing upon Halton to give up
reins after taking it well out of the thoroughbreds—for a very dif
ent kind of quadruped was employed to work the mail on other pa
of the road. In fact, Harry was about the only coachman in th
parts who could keep them to the collar at all, so much doub
thonging and energetic 'persuading' did they require. But he
a happy knack of making every horse do his fair share of work,
the old jades knew him so well that they tried all they knew
avoid an infliction of the terrible double thong and the 'tommy,'
article which was kept for extraordinary occasions, when a new
portation into the team had not learned the rules of strict discipli
Harry used to call a performance of this operation 'a reading of
Riot Act to 'em,' and would expound the intricacies of that strang
unintelligible act of a wise legislature in such a manner as
rarely required a repetition of the reading. So able an expound
indeed, was he of this subject, that we used to think he was b
for nobler purposes, and that he would have made an admira
Home Secretary, or a first-rate warder at Newgate, where a str
right arm and the best intentions are required for the correction
garrotters.

'So you are going out with the hounds, sir,' said he to the oc
pier of that most envied of situations, the box-seat.

'Yes,' said Halton, 'if I get there in time, and there i
mount left; but I don't think they are expecting me. Who's
game for?'

'Why, the parson, of course; you don't mean to say you di
know that? There's precious little game comes down by coach
ain't for him any way.'

'Where do the hounds meet?'

'Well, darn me but that's good, that is! You're going hunti
and don't know where they throw off!'

'No, I'm trusting entirely to chance. Haven't a notion
I'm even to get a mount, to say nothing of where they meet.'

'Why, th' old parson is giving a swell breakfast, and there'l
a rare lot out to-day; and I should say there won't be much
feed when it's all over, by the look of that there game. And besi
there's been enough fish going down to stock an ordinary marke

When the coach pulled up with the smoking horses at
King's Head in Mudbury, Halton was besieged by anxious fri
who were desirous of the pleasure of his esteemed company at t
various little excursions and festivities; but the prospects of supe
feeding at the parson's were all too potent for him to think of
minor entertainment.

The difficulty of procuring a mount was easily overcome, and the landlord furnished the requisite animal on promise of the usual hunter's fee of two guineas. Halton had only about two miles to ride to breakfast, so that his horse was as fresh as paint when the hounds were thrown into covert. The hunt-breakfast was pretty much like others of the kind which have been described and chronicled by sporting writers from time immemorial, except that the supply of cherry-bounce was more liberal and better appreciated than usual; and its consumption inspired many of the daring riders with a spurious Dutch courage that led to not a few accidents in the course of the day. There was a very large attendance of horsemen and footers of all kinds at the breakfast, who had no sort of intention of following the chase, which was a very fortunate thing for such of the company as meant business of another description; and there was a small contingent of hard-riding officers who would in a large field have been likely to scatter some of those ancient country gentlemen in most admired disorder; for they were not in the habit of standing upon the order of their going, but of going at once at any negotiable-looking leap in the country. The parson, the Reverend John Vicarage, had been a rough-and-ready fox-hunter enough in his day; but the podagra, asthma, and rheumatism had done somewhat to reduce the fire of his long-ago youth, and he was content now to listen to the advice of his wife and lovely daughters, and to give over the pleasures of the chase. The pleasures of the table, however, were quite 'another pair of boots,' as he phrased it, and from having been a four-bottle man when at Oxford, it was difficult to keep him within prudential bounds at the feast of reason and the flow of soul.

> 'What ho, my jovial mates! come on; we'll frolic it,
> Like fairies frisking in the merry moonshine,
> Seen by the curtal friar, who, from some christening
> Or some blithe bridal, hies belated cell-ward.
> He starts, and changes his bold bottle swagger
> To churchman's pace professional, and ransacking
> His treacherous memory for some holy hymn,
> Finds but the roundel of the midnight catch.'

But nothing gave him greater pleasure than to entertain a choice collection of guests, and certainly he always did the honours of his table like a gentleman, and he carved difficult joints with a delicacy that would have excited the jealousy of an ancient Roman. The hospitality of this prince of country entertainers culminated in the offer of beds to as many of his guests as could be accommodated, and who had long distances to ride to reach their homes. Indeed, the offer of a bed is even more essential than the invitation to a good dinner at a country house in the depth of winter, where shelves are high and sleeping conveniences more than ordinarily scarce and uncomfortable.

Parson Vicarage lived in a mining district, and on New-Yea Day there was always a general holiday observed among the mini population, for whom a plentiful supply of beer awaited their a proach to join the meet and to see the 'fox-dawgs.' The wher abouts of Reynard were very well known, there being any numb of rabbits on the glebe-land, and the thickly rabbit-peopled bral about a mile or so from the house was almost always a sure fin The hounds were of the dwarf fox order, little black-backed anima with whom no fox could long live in covert and for whom no d was too long nor work too hard. They were hardly in covert on t present occasion before a fine old dog-fox stole away over the st wall at the head of the brake, and to the ringing 'Tally-ho!' of huntsman they came tearing over the fence and struggling for lead, like a regiment of Zouaves at a practicable breach. It wa merry time of it, and every man, from the quickness of the find the plain-sailing over a piece of moorland, had an excellent equal start. The hounds were so close at his brush, and they been laid on so expertly, that the fox was soon fain to cut the o country and resort to stratagem. The 'intakes' near the moor often poor riding-ground, and their old tumble-down walls and fen are very awkward things to 'negotiate' sometimes. In racing the lead with a sporting farmer, Halton and that gentleman ca noned badly, and the leg of the former coming in contact with moor-stone post, he was nearly paralysed on one side for a minu or two. The farmer fortunately had some 'jumping powder' in t shape of a pocket pistol of gin, and this he considerately offered his comrade.

'Down with it, sir,' said he, as Halton, nothing loth, greed swallowed the entire contents of the flask. 'You look as pale a ghost, and your lips are like a piece of bad tripe. It'll make y ride again like a Trojan.'

And so it did—for Halton, when the blood began to circul again, was temporarily demented. He rode like a very madm and nothing came amiss to him and his horse while under t potent influence of the fire-water. Not so well fared many othe who, seeing the daring and successful rider in front, were desir of emulating so bold an example. How it was done in safety it hard to say, but Halton and the hack actually flew a five-bar the swing, and still pursued their mad career. One of the m tary, who up to the accident in the gateway had alternately led t van with Halton, dared not refuse the leap with the eyes of all t field upon him, and the consequence was that his mare—a high bred black with the distinguishing flea-bitten white spots so indic tive of good blood—hit the top bar, and the captain fell headlon Unfortunately his foot hung in the stirrup, a natural consequenc of hunting in racing-boots without a heel-tap, and the mare lookin

back at the sprawling object on the ground, and finding her progress hindered, kicked out viciously, just cutting open the breast of the gallant captain's pink coat, and missing by the merest shave to stave in his ribs and perhaps finish him off incontinently. Two or three of the field were, however, as luck would have it, well up, and the captain was soon extricated from his perilous position and put in sailing order again as if nothing uncommon had happened.

The fox, having by this time had a tremendous bustling for about three parts of an hour without a check for an instant, resorted to the time-honoured dodge of turning short down a ditch on the off-side of a moorland hedge, flanked on either side with sharp cutting slate-stones, stuck in so as to prevent cattle from ranging beyond their customary boundaries. The hounds and so many of the followers as could get over this obstacle overlashed the scent; and the huntsman, making a head cast, would probably have lost the fox, had not a loafing miner viewed that animal as he was skulking away dead-beat. A view halloo soon brought the eager pack upon the line again, and poor Charley was soon run into and pulled down —Halton, by every right of vert, venison, and venery, claiming the honour of the brush.

'You rode it out well,' exclaimed that gentleman's numerous admirers, who from the lucky check had been enabled to get up at the finish and present their hearty congratulations.

But Halton's breath, which might have been compared to the fumes of a London gin-palace, told its own tale about the recklessness of his riding and the spasmodic energy he had exhibited.

'Thought how it was, by Jove, from the first. A flask of gin on the top of the parson's bounce, my boy, and there you have the rough-and-ready fox-hunter, eh?'

Such was the depreciating remark made upon a discovery of the true cause of Mr. Halton's noble display of horsemanship; and he himself was fain to confess that very much of the prowess he had exhibited was owing to the gin-flask of the too-generous farmer.

The parson's dinner was at five sharp; and woe betide the luckless wight who kept the reverend gentleman waiting for that most important business of the day. Punctuality was a matter of the strictest regard with him and his household. In the country, it may be remarked that this is a very excellent thing, and that horrible nuisance, the half-hour before dinner, when the talk must almost of necessity be about sheep-farming, road-making, hunting, shooting, or village scandal, need never be encountered in a well-regulated family.

The Misses Vicarage, of whom there were two—the eldest having entered into the holy state of matrimony with a neighbouring clergyman, without a cure indeed, but with a respectable purse—were very domesticated young ladies; and on the present occasion they sur-

passed themselves in their endeavours to do fitting honours to their guests. They personally superintended the cooking of the various joints, poultry, and game, and in the matter of confectionery, flummery, and junket they had exhausted their entire skill in rendering all those delicacies, comestibles, and tickle-stomachs in the very highest style of culinary excellence. The wine was left to the undivided sway of the parson himself; and it must be confessed, that although he prided himself upon being the best bottler out, and would always have his wines sent home in the quarter cask, so that the merchant's duffers should not spoil them by their untutored handling, he contrived to place them upon the table in anything but an artistic condition.

There was very little time cut to waste before getting to dinner, and the company were so numerous that poor Halton—who as the friend of the family had to sit next to Miss Vicarage, and do the carving for that estimable young person—had to put the hind legs of his chair inside the fender, and the consequence was he was well-nigh roasted before dinner was half over.

He got through the turbot all right enough, but having to perform upon a Batavian goose—a thing neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red-herring—he made a terrible hash of it, splashed the table-cloth disgracefully, and, worst of all, spoiled Miss Vicarage's best dress. And that lady was hardly to be pitied for the mishap, for all the company fought shy of the Batavian goose except herself; and seeing this she was determined that it should not be removed uncarved, and therefore sacrificed herself upon the altar of hospitality. She had plenty of what Mr. Disraeli would have called 'Batavian grace' for her pains, and very little else; for Halton, after sawing and hacking away at that wretched bird, managed only to jag off at last a miserable drumstick, which would hardly have regaled a sickly fly.

A differentiated gardener—the parson was no end of a horticulturist, and spent heaps of money on his garden and greenhouse, cultivating all sorts of rare plants and exotics, for names to which you might ransack botanical dictionaries in vain—seeing Halton's distress, approached him with the generous intention of furnishing him with some liquor, the panacea in his estimation for all the ills that flesh is heir to.

'Thank you, John, I'll take a glass of beer.'

In a dramatic whisper, however, John conveyed the information that the beer was a 'little off,' and added:

'Try a drop of the cider, Mr. John. It's prime, and will do you all the good in the world. 'Tis the same as we had up to cricket-field back in the summer.'

'All right, let's have a pull at the cider by all means.'

Of a truth it was the best thing to be done under the circum-

tances, for Halton was by this time blowing like a grampus, and he was wedged in between the table and the fire in a position that a stranded turtle might have tried in vain to imitate successfully. Miss Vicarage was dreadfully scandalised, but that was a secondary consideration, and the fact of her confusion in no way interfered with Halton's thorough enjoyment of the invigorating draught of pure apple-juice.

There was nothing remarkable about the general conversation, and the clerical element being strongly represented, it may be imagined that there was not anything very interesting about it. But there were one or two rather startling exceptions. For instance, one gentleman was heard to remark that it was a very fine day, though at the time it was pitch dark, the window-shutters were closed, and the lamps lit. Again, a reverend gentleman who migrated from Oxford to Cambridge before taking his degree, had joined in an interesting conversation about the cutting of diamonds, the Kohinoor from some ill-chance having been mentioned. Upon being asked to account—he was a remarkably scientific man, and would discuss any question with you upon any subject, from politics to pigeon-shooting, with equal ease and stupidity—for the change of hue, or some such thing, in the different parts of the stone when cut, he accounted for the phenomenon very pleasantly but authoritatively on the score of sympathy. The conclusion was not convincing; and another clergyman—an ordinary lay member of any decent society would scarcely have been so coarse and ill-bred—who could not quite swallow such an outrageous pill as that a stone could possess sympathy, he himself having clearly very little of that commodity on hand, remarked with a peculiarly ironical air:

'I bow of course to the judgment of a gentleman who has had the benefit of two university educations.'

Presently the dear little cherubs of the married daughter arrived upon the scene in order to partake of the sweets and other dainties. The light artillery of the feast had been placed for convenience—the domestics were very clumsy in their manipulation of delicacies, and every assistance had to be rendered them—upon a small round table. The cloth was yards too long, and the eldest child, a sweet girl of six or seven summers, 'caught her foot' in the cloth, and away came the gooseberry-fool, the flummery, the filberts, and the raisins, like winking. It was a grand hash, and the young ones had a fine worry for the 'spilt milk' over which it was no use crying. The Misses Vicarage were almost in a state of paralysis, but there were many hard-hearted people present who thought the capsizing of the sweets the finest part of the entire performance. Something was saved from the general wreck, and notably the junket upon which the ladies had expended so much care and attention. An elderly gentleman managed to get a helping to this confection

shortly afterwards, when something like order and decorum were restored, but his enjoyment of it was spoiled by a great male-woman of a servant knocking his wig off into his plate, while he sat aghast with his head as bald as a billiard-ball. Nobody up to this time had ever supposed that he wore a wig, and even by his own factotum he was considered to possess quite 'a nobby 'ead of 'air.'

The lord of misrule was in it if there was not food for mirth in plenty after these catastrophes. Everybody was in an esctasy of enjoyment, and even the gentleman with the wig, or rather without the wig, was at last in convulsions of merriment. The darling children were petted and stuffed on all hands, the excellences and qualifications of each had been duly discussed, and their striking resemblance to their proud parents had been universally remarked upon, when that luckless clergyman, whose wit was always outrunning his discretion, discharged another bombshell upon the company, and this time with the most deadly effect, over which he must have inwardly chuckled to his heart's content.

The conversation turned on christenings—not at all an unnatural topic among clergymen and children—when the father of the dear child who had played old gooseberry with the dainties said that he objected to more than one Christian name, and quoted his father as a worthy precedent, that ancient party being called 'Simple William.'

'Well, but that's two names, isn't it?' questioned that sarcastic sceptic in the matter of the diamonds.

Music, by the powers! a band of music—that is to say, the miner's brass band are tuning up outside the window, having come up to do honour to the feast in return for the morning's entertainment, and in the hope of getting some supper and beer.

Dancing is not usual after a heavy dinner, but the feast proved no drawback on this occasion, and the decks were soon cleared for action; that is to say, the great hall was cleared of superfluous crockery-ware and unnecessary chairs before the eager couples entered on their dizzy career. Probably such aristocratic dancers had never before footed it to such a horrid accompaniment of discordant music. The cornet-à-piston was in a state of evident intoxication, and the trombone threatened to burst in the tremendous attempts to drown all other sounds, while the ophicleide—that charming instrument which the late Albert Smith could never be prevailed upon to practise, from a fear that he should fall bodily into it—boomed away with positively amazing energy and volume of sound. But it was all to no powerless amid the howling wind, and the gentlemen of the brass band had to be invited inside the porch, in order that their dulcet strains might be duly heard and proper time kept.

There was terrible jealousy on the part of the dowagers, concerning the due precedence of their charming daughters, and a dreadful

time of it the few dancing bachelors had in consequence. There were two Oxford men with great expectations present, at whom they were all setting their caps, and it was quite horrible to see the countenances of sundry ancient dames when Miss Laura Pike, who had not a penny nor any pretensions to good looks, was twice, thrice, and four times invited to dance, and it was apparent with what throes their shrivelled old bosoms were racked. In fact, Miss Pike and her sprightly mother ran a neck-and-neck race for distinction, for Oxford men know how necessary it is to be on good terms with the mother if you have ulterior designs upon the daughter. The difference in years between them was so small that anybody would have taken them for sisters; but the elder lady had such an old-fashioned and awkward habit of dancing the steps of a dance, and of twiddling her toes about, that a man was in perpetual fear of her winding up the performance with a regular stage pirouette. Indeed, there was a scandal industriously circulated among the offended matrons aforesaid to the effect that Mrs. Pike had, in her more youthful days, been the sylph of the arena; and that there were those alive who had actually seen her bounding through hoops and over star-spangled banners at the hippodrome. But that may be accounted for on the score that Mrs. and Miss Pike were very pretty, and were blessed with particularly neat feet and ankles.

Halton did his best to be impartial, and perhaps might have succeeded but for the chagrin and officiousness of a maiden aunt of the Misses Vicarage. This old lady, forgetful of their position as hostesses, would have had those young damsels figuring away in every dance, no matter what other girls might have sat regretfully repining in the corner. It was she who so persistently circulated the scandal about Mrs. Pike, not knowing that 'there is so much of base alloy in our very best (unassisted) thoughts, that it is melancholy work to criticise too closely the motives of our most worthy actions; at least, we would recommend to every one to let those of his neighbours pass current, however narrowly he may examine the purity of his own.'

Halton at last, worn out with the fatigues of the entire day and with the hard running at the finish, sank exhausted upon what he thought was a seat—excusable in his condition and amid the partial gloom—but what turned out to be the best porphyry jar, a thing of much magnificence and beyond all price. It was broken off from its stand, but has since been cobbled up, and still stands as a sad memorial of that night of dissipation. Yet the man cannot exclaim:

> 'My mind misgives;
> Some consequence yet hanging in the stars
> Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
> With this night's revels.'

SIRIUS.

friend William Brown, now. He is a married man, has half a
children, lives in a nice little house Clapham-way, always has
thing hot for supper and a glass of grog for himself and a
afterwards, and yet, as far as I know, he has no income wh
He's an old schoolfellow of mine, which gives him a kind o
upon me; and ever since I have renewed my early acquaintanc
him,—he called upon me some years ago, when I first enter
Majesty's Civil Service as a junior clerk, to request my i
with the authorities to procure him an appointment of some k
ever since then he has been out of employment and on the lo
for an opening. I'm afraid that, in the self-importance of y
gave William a too exalted idea of my influence with the '
rities,'—whoever they may be,—that I patronised him a litt
held out some hopes, however vague, that I might possibl
across something that might provide him with the wished-for
ing. Indeed I may say that I was as good as my word, a
put him in the way of obtaining a public situation of some
ment, having succeeded in placing his name on a list of can
for an open competition for a situation in the Excise, for wh
poor fellow was uncommonly grateful. It turned out, by th
that the limit of age for these situations was from eighteen to t
and William was getting on for thirty-five. But this obstacle,
would have been fatal, I should have thought, didn't seem to
William at all. He was thirty-five, it was true; but he had
brother once who was dead, poor fellow, who, if he had lived,
have been just the right age, and it was evident he was wr
nobody by making use of the baptismal certificate and other
that would have been poor Bob's if he had been alive. He s

Rule of Three; a rule, he informed me, that isn't of the slightest use in mercantile affairs, and is indeed considered quite obsolete by men of business. But still, as I told him, 'William, you ought to have got it up.' Obsolete and stupid as might have been the system of examination, he ought to have accommodated himself to circumstances—he ought to have gone in for the Rule of Three; for it's a very simple thing. You put your figures in a row with dots between them, and if the answer comes out wrong—and it does sometimes, tremendously—you may be sure you've put the wrong figures in the middle, and you must alter 'em. But I've found that mercantile men, as a rule, are pigheaded. William was a mercantile man; he had been a clerk in a draper's counting-house; William was pigheaded. He wouldn't go in for the Rule of Three, and, 'Then, William,' I said, 'you must abandon all thoughts of entering the public service of your country.' He did so with the greatest philosophy, not appearing much cast-down by his ill success.

The next time I met William, he told me he was in the building trade. I couldn't learn that he had done anything in the way of building himself, but he was on commission, he told me. At all events he had succeeded in obtaining a very nice little house, the one he at present inhabits, and on such advantageous terms that he had three landlords, each one of whom forbade him to pay any rent to the other. It was true that they occasionally varied their proceedings by putting in an execution, as they called it, upon William, who, however, with his usual resource, had hit upon an ingenious way of defeating their manœuvres by means of a bill of sale, the operation of which he explained to me, but I can't exactly recollect the particulars.

William came to me one day in a state of jubilant excitement. The opening had come at last. William was on the high-road to fortune. When explained, the opening was found to consist of an operation, and in the building trade. It consisted in buying houses and selling them again at an immense profit; really on paper it looked most promising; but then one must make allowance for the sanguine nature of projectors. There was one little requisite, William added, a very trifling obstacle—capital.

'Now, you know,' he said, 'you can't expect *me* to have capital.'

'Clearly not,' I said.

'I look upon my family,' William went on, 'as my capital, the children I've brought up and educated; they represent an immense fund, but it is at present sunk—unavailable, in fact.'

Yes, I didn't see how they could be turned to account.

'Then,' went on William, 'the question arises, how is the thing to be met? Clearly by somebody advancing the requisite capital—putting himself, as it were, in the place of the original investor, sharing his profits without sharing his risks; but that advantage,'

said William, 'I'm quite content he should have. Now the question is, where to find the man?'

'Yes, there it is,' said I; 'there must be plenty of men who'd be glad of such a chance; but I can't think of anybody at present.'

'I thought of *you* once,' said William; 'but I dismissed the idea. No; it wouldn't do for you.'

'O, I don't see that,' I said, 'if the amount were a reasonable one.'

'Reasonable!' said William: 'it's ridiculous. Fifty pounds. The half-share in a fortune for fifty pounds! Bah! the thing's absurd.'

Now it so happened that I had a little more than fifty pounds to my credit at the London and Westminster Bank, on deposit, and they'd just reduced the interest to two per cent, which was disgusting; but still I'm such a cautious bird that I wouldn't give William an answer till I'd an opportunity of consulting an old friend of mine, a lawyer of large practice in the City. And, strange to say, he didn't think so highly of the scheme as William did; and yet they were both clever men,—but sometimes these lawyers are overcautious.

'Don't let him have the money without good security,' he said; 'personal would do—one good name besides his own.'

I told William this, and he didn't raise any difficulty at all,—thought it was quite a proper, though needless, precaution; and he named to me a man, one Wilks, whom I knew very well, and to be a good responsible man. There was no doubt of his consent, but as a matter of form it would be as well to ask him. In the course of the next day I had a note from William, saying laconically, 'All right—will come to-morrow night.' So I withdrew my deposit, and waited at home to meet Master William.

He came next night in the highest spirits.

'Well, I've succeeded admirably; better than I could possibly have expected. In point of fact, I shall no longer want your help. Still I shall be ever grateful to you; and some other time I may have another good thing open.'

'Then you've got the money,' I said. 'Well, William, I'm glad of it. It has put me to a little inconvenience withdrawing my deposit, and so on; but never mind that,—I'm glad your friends have such confidence in you.'

'I haven't got the money yet, but I'm to have it to-night; in fact Wilks entered into the matter at once, in the handsomest way. "Look here," he said; "I daresay our friend Malam hasn't any too much cash at his banker's, but I know him to be a good honest fellow; now," he said, "*I'll* advance the money."'

'That was very good of Wilks,' I said.

'Wasn't it?—no "consulting my lawyer" there, Malam!—

come, old friend, only my joke you know; but he says, "I'll advance the money, and Malam shall be security." It comes to just the same thing, you see.'

'Is it the same thing?' I said doubtfully.

I haven't got a mathematical head, and these commercial transactions generally bother me. It seemed very much like the same thing, only reversed, but then—was it?

'But is it the same thing, William?' I said again.

'It's precisely the same thing to me,' cried William.

'Yes; but to me?'

'O, it's much *better* for you,—you don't have to part with the money, you see.'

'Yes,' I said, 'it seems very much better, as you say, but then it isn't quite what we agreed to. I don't suppose the difference is material, but as I have consulted my friend the lawyer in the extensive practice in the City about it, I don't think it would do for me to alter the arrangement he pointed out without asking his opinion as to the alteration.'

Now I could see William was a good deal annoyed about this, but what could I do?

William took away his papers in a huff, and I didn't see him again for a year. Yes, it was at least a year after, that Wilkins the messenger came into my room when I was having my luncheon, half a pint of porter and an abernethy—and gave me a little bit of crumpled paper done up into the form of a note. 'There's a young person in the waiting-room says she'll wait for an answer.'

'Dear Malam,' said the note, 'will you send me a sovereign by bearer, my daughter Annabel, your god-daughter, for a particular purpose? Don't fail.'

'I'll see her myself, Wilkins,' I remarked to the messenger, and went out into the waiting-room. There are generally a good many people in the waiting-room, and so there were on this occasion—people waiting for an interview with the heads of departments—and there, perched on the table, swinging her legs with the greatest nonchalance, was my god-daughter Annabel Brown. I must say that I felt a little twinge of remorse to think how I'd neglected my duties towards her, never having troubled myself to see whether she was confirmed, or anything of the sort. But she was a fine well-grown girl of seventeen or so, and indeed showed how fast she had grown taller and broader by her garments, which were rather short, and displayed more leg than was altogether seemly, and also didn't meet in front as well as they might have done.

'Well, 'Enry,' she said when she saw me,—she was immersed in an Army List, but looked up and greeted me with a smile as I entered,—'how about the skiv?'

I was a good deal embarrassed, because everybody looked at us

and grinned; and young Saunders, who is my junior and loses no opportunity of making nasty remarks about me, happened to be in the room speaking to a friend, and watched us sardonically. You've read, I daresay—I haven't myself, I confess, but I've heard him mentioned in society—of a monster called Frankenstein, who haunts somebody very much. Well, it struck me, this was exactly my case. William was Frankenstein, and here was a Miss Frankenstein, and how many more heaven only knew!—a monster-brood, I said to myself, and bit my lips, and was very angry.

'O, I understand,' said Annabel, misinterpreting my silence. 'Usual thing; left your purse at home, eh? Or have you just paid a heavy bill, and not a farthing in the house? All right, 'Enry; don't apologise, I beg: bless you, I'm used to it.'

'Well, as it happens,' said I, 'Miss Annabel'—I put the Miss in very strong to let it appear that we weren't blood relations—'as it happens, I *have* left my purse at home.'

'Really now?' she said. 'Without any kid? Then look here: I'll go and fetch it for you.'

'I couldn't think of that,' said I.

'Then fetch it yourself,' said she.

'But I can't leave here till four o'clock.'

'Then I'll wait for you,' she cried. 'O, don't mind me! I can amuse myself very well. It's rather fun watching these old blokes pop in and out, like old rats;—you know the look of a very old rat when it's worn and gray. Well, your men in public offices look just like that when they get old—not so cunning, though—O no!' said Annabel with a laugh.

And Cropper, our chief clerk—I believe Saunders had sent him in on purpose—was standing just behind us, and—well, he does look exactly like an old rat. But what was I to do with this *fille terrible*?

'But you can't stop here,' I said, 'unfortunately, I'm afraid; at least, it would be thought not the thing, you know.'

'O, bother that; but, look here then, I'll go and wait for you in the park. Lend me a penny, you shall have it back in a week—honour, you know!—and I'll get a roll, and go and feed the ducks, and I'll meet you. Where shall I meet you?'

'O, that won't do at all,' I said. 'Look here,' I cried, in desperation: 'tell your father I'll come up to-night without fail and see him, and explain matters to him.'

'And bring the skiv?' she cried.

'O yes, yes.'

Did I make a mental reservation, then? Heaven forgive me if I did.

'That's a promise, then. You'll come; only you won't see father, 'cause he's in quod.'

'O, dear,' I faltered—Cropper was listening to every word—'O, dear, how did that happen?'

it's nothing,' she said; 'only county-court. But it's too 't it? They tell us imprisonment for debt is abolished, and ok how they serve us! It's a *shame!*' cried Annabel, look- nd for the sympathy of the bystanders.

was more than I could endure. I hurried her out of the ; she insisted on kissing me on the steps in full view of rse Guards and St. James's Park, and left me more dead ve. I was afraid Cropper would say something. I should t him if he had, I was so savage; and there'd have been a ow.

ent up to Clapham that night, and a most heart-rending witnessed. I'm not good at pathos, so will leave that to agination, only adding that I was so overcome that I lent e 'skiv,' and promised to see all William's creditors on the and arrange matters with them. And then, as if by magic, e changed. My sovereign had set the house a-going again. vas a nice little supper—lamb's-fry and new potatoes, and f capital stout, and a bottle of Irish whisky; and after sup- abel dashed off some jolly pieces on the old rattle-trap piano; n I got excited, and wanted to dance; and then mother sat the piano and played to us, and Annabel and I waltzed he garden by the light of the moon. O, it was delicious! spent such an evening in my life. When the bells struck t I was walking up and down that little garden at Clapham nabel on my arm, and positively I was making love to her. as the beginning of it.

always had the impression that I should marry well. All ds had told me so. 'Henry,' they'd say, 'with your position antages, you ought to marry well.' But here I was, thirty- early, and no nearer it than when I started. I was begin- lose the hair on the top of my head; I'd two false teeth; of making my way in society, I was fast losing the few friends rly had. And then Annabel was delicious. Once hav- le up my mind that I liked the girl, I was soon convinced was my duty as her god-parent to see that she was nicely , and I bought her lots of pretty things, for which she was teful and would give me most sweet kisses. And as she ten to see me on her father's business, the fellows at the gan to talk about her, and chaff me. And Saunders, too, t desperately spooney over her; and that decided me. When Saunders was looking after her, I went in.

father called when I was in this state of mind and wanted ow twenty pounds for a particular purpose—a purpose that eturn the money to him fifty-fold hereafter. I thought this opportunity to speak my mind. I told him that I would lend s sum for this one occasion, as I had certain views with re-

BELGRAVIA

FEBRUARY 1874

LOST FOR LOVE

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

CHAPTER X.

'You do me wrong to take me out o' the grave.
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire.'

IT was not quite ten o'clock when they arrived in Fitzroy-square, so Mr. Chamney insisted upon taking both his friends up to the drawing-room for the doch-an-dorrach, or parting cup, which in this instance took the shape of brandy-and-seltzer. He was tired, and flung himself at full length on a capacious old sofa; but was not too tired to ask for one of his favourite songs.

'Give us the "Land of the Leal," Flo,' he said; and Flora went to the piano obediently, and began those pathetic words of Caroline Nairne's. But half-way in the second verse she broke down suddenly and burst into tears.

Walter was by her side in a moment, bending over her tenderly, asking if she were ill or tired. Her father looked round wonderingly.

'Why, Baby, what's the matter?'

She took no notice of the painter's solicitude, but left the piano and knelt down by her father's sofa, and put her arms round his neck.

'Forgive me for being so foolish, darling,' she said, in lowest tones, meant for his ear alone; 'but I can't bear any song that speaks of parting. You won't leave me, will you, dear? You'll take care of yourself, and get strong and well, and never leave me?'

He took her to his heart and kissed her fondly.

'May God be merciful to us, my dearest, and lengthen our days together!' he said gently; 'I will do nothing to shorten them. And

'I don't know—nothing! I was miserable at home, so I came out for a walk. One may as well be miserable out of doors as in that stuffy room with grandma. I knew very well where you'd be, so I went to look up at the windows—for company.'

'Poor Loo!' with infinite compassion. 'Why, the books I lent you would have been better company than that!'

'Yes, if I could only read them. But I can't—at least not till grandma's gone to bed. It's a crime to open a book in her opinion. I sit up till three in the morning sometimes reading, though. I think I know the *Bride of Abydos* by heart. But even then I get bullied about the candle being burnt out.'

'I wouldn't say bullied, Loo. It's out of harmony with feminine lips.'

'Pitched into, then.'

'Worse and worse. Isn't it just as easy to say scolded?'

'I daresay it is; but it does me more good to say bullied. I do get bullied, nagged at and bullied from morning till night. Is it my fault if things are dearer than they used to be, and taxes higher? I'm sure I'm treated as if it was.'

The old leaven would show itself sometimes in this poor Louisa, despite of the refining influence which had wrought so swift a change. Her mood to-night was not the softest. She knew that she was falling back into the old lowness, for which she had hated herself and her surroundings even to loathing; but there was a sullen anger in her heart just now which made her indifferent to her own degradation. What did these small distinctions of language signify? She could never be a lady. In the good old days of the slave-trade it mattered very little to one of that subject-race what shade of blackness his visage wore. There were no degrees of bondage. Under that baleful law every colour counted as black. So with Louisa's slavery to the bondmaster Poverty. Of what use were her dim aspirations to refinement when she knew herself without the pale?

'What's the good of telling me not to use vulgar words?' she said sullenly; 'I should never be like *her;*' with a jerk of her head in the direction of Mr. Chamney's abode.

'You might be a very superior young woman for all that,' replied the painter, not disputing her proposition; 'you've brains enough for anything. Come, Loo, I'll tell you a secret. We'd better walk towards Voysey-street, though; it doesn't look well standing about here.'

'As if looks mattered for such as me.'

'Your favourite Byron would have said "such as I"—am understood. I don't know what's amiss with you to-night, Loo; you're not like yourself.'

'Yes, I am; more like myself than I've been for a long time. I've been trying hard to be like some one else. Not *her!*' with another

jerk; 'for of course *that's* impossible. Such as me—I—can't be like perfection. You might as soon wash negroes white—real negroes, not Christy's. I did try to grow a little better, though; but to-night I had a fit of unhappiness—or wickedness—I don't know which, for in me they seem almost the same thing—and I came out of doors to get out of myself if I could.'

'Poor Loo!' murmured Walter, in the same compassionate tone as gently as if he had been trying to comfort a fretful child. 'Poor foolish, impatient Loo! Come, now, it's time I told you my grand secret.'

'That you're going to be married soon, I suppose?' she said. There are women who—in such moods as this woman was now in—take a savage pleasure in saying things that hurt them.

'Nothing of the kind. I—well—to tell you the truth, I've been a little unsettled in my ideas of matrimony lately. Yet Flora is the sweetest girl in the world. To deny that would be a kind of treason. Only you see a man has to discover whether a particular kind of sweetness suits his particular temper, and to be very sure that the honey never could cloy. Some men even like their honey with a dash of vinegar in it. In short, I have a disagreeable knack of not knowing my own mind.'

All this was said with as much freedom and frankness as if he had been talking to a young man instead of to a young woman.

'What is your grand secret, then, if it isn't that?' asked Loo still in a sullen tone.

'Why, it's about you, my dear Louisa. Ever so long ago, very soon after I began the "Lamia," I determined to make you some little recompense for your kindness in sitting to me.'

'My kindness!' echoed the girl scornfully. 'As if it wasn't pleasanter to me to sit and hear poetry than to scrub floors or run errands.'

'I'm glad it wasn't unpleasant; but still it was a kindness to me all the same. I made up my mind I'd do something; and when I found out what a clever girl you are, I said to myself the something shall take the form of education. If the picture succeeds—was a fancy of mine to make it contingent on the success of the picture—I'll send Loo to the best boarding-school I can find, for three years; at the end of which time she'll be a well-educated young lady, and able to get her own living in a lady-like manner. Young women are not at a discount as they used to be; there are telegraph offices and houses of business, and goodness knows what, open to the weaker sex nowadays. Well, the picture hasn't succeeded yet; in point of fact, it has not been sent in. But the "Esmeralda" for which you sat is the first picture I've ever had hung, and it's been well spoken of in half a dozen newspapers. So you see you've been lucky to me after all, Loo.'

'I'm glad of that,' she said in a softer tone.

'Therefore, as delays are dangerous, I've resolved to finish the pictures you're sitting for as fast as I can, and make immediate arrangements for sending you to school.'

To his surprise and consternation the girl shook her head resolutely.

'I won't go to school,' she said; 'it's very good of you to think of it, and I'm grateful. But I don't want schooling. You couldn't school me into a lady; and as for being a governess, I couldn't sit quiet to teach children grammar and geography if it was my only chance of escaping starvation. I'm pretty quick at figures, and I could learn anything I should want to know for a house of business in a quarter's evening school—at Mr. Primrose's in Cave-square. I think, though, I'd rather emigrate when you've done your pictures. I had an aunt that went to Australia, and I've sometimes thought of getting away from Voysey-street and grandma's worrying by going off like her.'

Walter Leyburne shuddered. Here was a strong-minded young woman for whom he could do nothing—a young woman who could calmly contemplate a solitary voyage to the Antipodes.

'I can't tell you how you've disappointed me,' he said. 'Do think it over quietly, and try to see the question in a different light. Consider all the advantages of education.'

'What could it do for me except raise me above my station?' asked Loo moodily; 'and make me hate Voysey-street just a shade more than I do now. It wouldn't give me a new father—not but what I'm fond of him as he is—or a new grandmother. It wouldn't make me more on a level with your perfect young lady in Fitzroy-square.'

'How you harp upon her, child! Why, education would raise you to her level! It is only education that constitutes her present superiority. Her sweetness is the sweetness of a refined nature which has never been degraded by vulgar associations.'

'But my nature has been so degraded,' replied Loo quickly. 'You couldn't wash the vulgarity out. Laying English grammar and French, and music and drawing, and the use of the globes, over the degradation wouldn't be much use. It would be like father's varnishing a bad picture—the picture may look a little better, but the bad drawing and the false colour are there all the same.'

'You talk like a philosopher,' said the painter, somewhat offended that his benevolent instincts should be thus thwarted; 'and I bow to your superior judgment. I will say no more.'

'Now you're angry with me,' cried Louisa, quick to hear the change in his tone; 'but indeed I'm not ungrateful. I should be so, if I let you waste your money in trying to do something that can't be done. As for education,' she went on with a sardonic laugh, 'rely upon it that's a luxury thrown away upon people of our class. I can

just read and write and cast-up a bill for grandma, and hold my own against the milkman when he wants us to pay for ha'porths we haven't had. That's enough for me. I don't suppose I could be fonder of Shakespeare and Byron than I am if I'd had ever so good an education.'

'Perhaps not; but you'd have a more critical appreciation of both.'

'That means that I should find out their faults. Then I don't want to be critical.'

'What a tiresome obstinate girl you are!'

'O, you can't lift me out of the mire; I was born in it. You've changed my life for a little time, and brightened it; but when the pictures are done, good-bye to the brightness. You'll have done with me.'

'Done with you! Now, Loo, is it kind to talk like that, when I want to be your true and loyal friend—as true to you as if we had been born brother and sister? The misfortune is, that the abominable laws of society—made, of course, to restrain miscreants—give so narrow a scope for friendship between a man of my age and a girl of yours. If you won't let me send you to school, I don't know that there's a single thing I can do for you to prove my friendship. I give you my honour I was thinking about this very subject at Richmond this afternoon.'

'At Richmond!' exclaimed Loo. 'You had been to Richmond with them, then? I saw you all get out of the carriage.'

'Foolish girl, to waste your time watching other people.'

'Richmond! that's a pretty place, isn't it?'

'Rather,' replied the young lord of the universe, secure in the possession of an income that would allow him to range the world from one garden of enchantment to another, and not disposed to be rapturous about a London suburb. 'Yes, it's a niceish place. Haven't you been there?'

'I've never been anywhere, except to Hampstead Heath once and to the Forest.'

'What forest?'

'Epping. Are there any other forests?'

'Any other forests! Poor child! To think that this world is so beautiful, and you have hardly seen anything outside Voysey street. Let the usages of society go hang! I'm not a ruffian, and I won't be fettered by them. Do you think your grandmother would let me take you for a day in the country, Loo? I could get a dog cart from the livery-stables, and I'd drive you down to some nice little village by the Thames—Shepperton or Halliford, or some such place. I'd ask the old lady to go with us; only I'm afraid she'd be rather a damper.'

'She would,' said Loo candidly. 'She always is a damper.'

'Do you think she'd let us go?'

'I don't know. Perhaps if you asked her she might.'

'Then I'll propose it to her to-morrow, after we've had a snack of some kind and a bottle or two of Edinburgh. Would you like to see the hawthorn hedges, and the river, and the reedy little islands, eh, Loo?'

'Would I like! What have I ever seen of the country, or of anything that's bright and pretty? It would seem like being in heaven. I always think the great beauty of heaven must be that it isn't like Voysey-street.'

They were in the much-abused Voysey-street by this time, and encountered two or three slip-shod specimens of the genus girl, fetching supper-beer. The chandler's shop was only just shutting; it was the noon of night at the shell-fish merchant's. They parted at the door of the ladies' wardrobe, Walter pledging himself to obtain Mrs. Gurner's permission for that holiday beside the winding Thames.

'You haven't any idea how jolly the river is, when you get high up towards Windsor, above the locks,' he said; and then bade Loo a kindly good-night. The promised pleasure had restored her spirits. Her eyes—those dark inscrutable eyes—had brightened; her whole aspect improved. Yet at the last she flung a random shot.

'What will Miss Chamney say if you take *me* out?' she said.

'It cannot make the slightest difference to Miss Chamney,' he answered stiffly. 'Good-night.'

The lifted hat, that dignified farewell, sent a chill to Loo's impatient heart.

'What's the good of my wearing myself into a fever about him?' she said to herself, as she went through the dark little shop, into the airless parlour, with a tolerable certainty of being 'nagged at' for her untimely absence. 'What am I to him, or he to me? There's nothing in nature farther apart. His kindness to me is only charity. I almost hate him for it.'

Yet she did not hate the idea of that day in the country, but yearned for it with a longing that was akin to pain. To be with him for a whole day, away from all the sights and sounds of Voysey-street—from the dirty room reeking with stale tobacco, the slatternly grandmother in her greasy black-silk gown, the sordid misery of her daily life; to escape from these things but for a few hours, and to be with him! Was it any wonder that she sickened at the thought of disappointment?

Chapter XI.

'Twas one of the charmèd days
When the genius of God doth flow—
The wind may alter twenty ways,
A tempest cannot blow:
It may blow north, it still is warm;
Or south, it still is clear;
Or east, it smells like a clover farm;
Or west, no thunder fear.'

Mrs. Gurner, conciliated by a Melton Mowbray veal-and-ham pie, washed down with copious draughts of Edinburgh ale, proved more tractable than might have been expected. She did not forget that dignity which was the strong rock of her life. She dilated upon the impropriety of a young gentleman giving a young lady a day's outing, unless those two young people were specifically understood by their circle of friends or acquaintance to be 'keeping company.' She had seen enough of good manners, before her misfortunes reduced her from the sphere in which she had been born and brought up, to be fully instructed upon this point. People who were keeping company might go where they liked; people who were not keeping company must defer to the prejudices of a too censorious world.

Walter reddened a little at these remarks, while Loo frowned and bit her nether lip, and tried to tread upon her grandmother's foot under the table.

'Never mind the censorious world, Mrs. Gurner. I hope you know that I'm not a scoundrel.'

'I have always found you, in every respect, the gentleman,' said the old lady, pouring out a final tumbler of Younger's Edinburgh.

'Then you may feel sure that your granddaughter will be safe in my care. I only want to give her a few hours' fresh air. See how white she looks.'

'I feel the want of fresh air myself,' said the elder lady, with a faint groan; 'but no one troubles themselves about *my* looks.'

Walter felt uncomfortable.

'I'm sure, my dear Mrs. Gurner, if you'd like to go with us—' he began, making a desperate offer. It would be fearful to have that old woman beside him in the dog-cart: and he could hardly put her on the back seat, with the possibility of her being jolted off and flattened upon the pavement. He wanted to be alone with Loo. He wanted a long sunny day in rural lanes, sheltered by elder and hawthorn, beside the winding river. He wanted to talk of Shakespeare and Keats and Byron, pictures, his hopes, his future—all those subjects which this poor uneducated Loo seemed to understand even better than Flora Chamney.

Happily Mrs. Gurner had mercy on him.

'No,' she said, 'two's company. I should only be an encumnce. Besides, I've had so little fresh air of late years that it ght turn me giddy. Let her go; let her enjoy herself; youth's time for happiness.' This with a dismal sigh.

The consent was yielded, however, and that was all Mr. Leyne cared about.

'If it's a fine day to-morrow I shall call for you at eleven ock,' said Walter.

Loo tried not to look quite as delighted as she was. After all, she t saying to herself, his kindness was only pity.

Walter went away curiously pleased at having gained his point. e idea of to-morrow's holiday elated him. He was surprised at own gladness.

'There's something so fresh and original about her,' he thought. suppose that's why I like her society so much. Or is it because ught not to be so fond of her company? ought not to have a ought for any one except that dear little Flora, who seems to e been created on purpose for me? I wonder how it was Eve tened to the serpent. Was it out of sheer perversity, or because am was rather a dull companion?'

The next day was glorious, balmy, midsummer-like; a day ch raised Walter Leyburne's spirits to their most joyous point. ostler from the livery-stables had the dog-cart ready for him en he went into the yard. He had been artful enough to go to yard for that vehicle, rather than have it brought to his door in roy-square. He saw no actual wrong in what he was doing; it seemed to him just as well that neither Mark nor Miss mney should know anything about this little excursion.

He drove briskly round to Voysey-street, astonishing the gutter dren by the splendour of his appearance, in light-gray dust-coat white hat. Loo was ready. She had put on her claret-coloured , his own gift, to do him honour. A black-lace shawl, the loan which Mrs. Gurner had on this occasion conceded, draped her ing shoulders, a little black-lace bonnet, ingeniously constructed of odds and ends, perched coquettishly upon her raven hair— r which was plenteous enough to need no help from art—her ner, who knew of the intended excursion, and expressed no disroval, had given her three-and-sixpence for a new pair of gloves. e result was satisfactory, and Miss Gurner looked remarkably dsome—so handsome that Walter was almost startled.

'Why you look better than "Lamia"!' he exclaimed; 'and I ught I had you there at your best. There's more life, more our. I suppose it's because you look so happy. Poor child, think that the prospect of a drive in the country can give you so ch pleasure!'

'It isn't that—it's the prospect of being with you,' the girl answered, almost involuntarily.

Walter reddened a little—just as he had reddened yesterday when Mrs. Gurner made that awkward speech about keeping company; but he said never a word, and pretended to be rather busy with the horse for the next half-mile.

They left London by the Bayswater-road. For a long time villas and gardens, terraces, houses, detached and semi-detached, flashed by in endless succession; but when they had crossed Hammersmith-bridge they seemed to be in the country. Walter drove into Richmond-park by the Sheen gate, and across by the wildest, loneliest roads in that lovely park, to the Kingston gate; little bursts of rapture breaking from Loo's lips at every change in the picture—the scudding deer starting up from the young fern; the arching elms above the road; the plantations of pine and fir and tender larch, where young gray rabbits flashed in and out among the undergrowth. These things were all as new to Louisa Gurner as life and the world were to that ivory statue of King Pygmalion's, which the indulgent goddess endowed with consciousness.

Walter drove slowly through the park. To the painter's eye, the vernal landscape was ever new and delightful, and he wanted to see what impression natural beauty would make upon Louisa. For a little while she spoke not a word, but gazed breathless, with parted lips, only expressing her pleasure by that occasional cry of delight; but words came at last.

'I don't so much wonder now,' she said.

'You don't wonder at what?'

'Keats and Byron. It puzzled me so much to think where all their beautiful thoughts came from. But now I know the world is so lovely, it doesn't seem so strange there should be poets. A poet couldn't come out of Voysey-street.'

'He would hardly be much of a singer if he had never been face to face with nature, certainly. Yet there might be stuff for such a muse as Crabbe's, even in Voysey-street. And so you think the world lovely, do you, Loo? Yet Richmond-park is only a little bit of the world Byron knew.'

'I feel as if I'd seen all that he saw,' answered Loo. 'When I read *Childe Harold* late at night, while grandma's asleep—not reading it as you'd read a novel, you know, but gloating over it—I seem to be standing by his side. If you were to ask me what Lake Leman was like, or the mountains, or Rome, I couldn't tell you; but I feel as if I had it all in my mind—the water, and the sky, and the warm sweet air, and everything standing out clear and vivid, like a picture.'

'The work of a strong imagination, Loo. Rather a dangerous gift,' said Walter, with the air of a sage.

'Is it? Well, sometimes I do fancy I was happier before I knew there were such people as poets. I used to feel miserable enough then, to be sure, but it was a dull quiet kind of misery; it didn't hurt me so much. I could always sleep when I was tired, and forget my troubles. I don't think I ever dreamt, in those days. But now I feel restless, and there's a fever in my mind sometimes, and I have such wishes and longings for a brighter life!'

This speech, uttered with that reckless candour which was a characteristic of Loo's, made Mr. Leyburne somewhat thoughtful.

'I'll tell you what it is, Loo,' he began presently; 'if you'd only let me carry out that idea of mine about your education, you might have as bright and happy a life as any girl need wish for. Just think how many doors education would open for you. You might get a situation as governess or companion in some family who were roving about the Continent, and then you would see Switzerland, and Italy, and all the ground Childe Harold travelled over. Do just consider.'

'I have considered, and I won't be beholden to you,' answered Loo bluntly. 'I don't want to be educated; I don't want to be made any better than I am. I should only feel my degradation more than I do now.'

'But, my dear girl, why harp upon what you call your degradation? There's no degradation in poverty.'

'Perhaps not. I daresay some people have the art of making poverty delightful. You read about such people in novels. But there is degradation in dirt, and we are dirty; not for want of scrubbing and cleaning, for I don't spare that; but because everything about us is old and dingy and grubby; the dirt seems to have got into the pores of the house; and then grandma is dirty, grows upon her as she gets older. And there's degradation in the words mispronounced and misapplied; and grandma does it. There's degradation in not being able to pay one's way; and we don't pay ours. There's degradation in telling stories about pictures; and father does it. You can't lift me out of all that; I'm steeped to the lips in it.'

'Really, Loo, you are the most incorrigible girl!' exclaimed Walter, sorely vexed by this obstinacy in Miss Gurner.

He wanted to do her some real service, feeling that he had done her disservice by raising her ideas above the dull level of her most prosaic surroundings.

'What am I to do for you, Loo?' he cried.

'Let me alone. I don't want to be taught to despise father. You can give me a day's pleasure like this, once in a way, if you like. I can live the rest of my life looking forward to it.'

Walter did not respond promptly to this suggestion. He had

begun to think already that this day in the country—a scheme of purest benevolence, like the summer treats which the charitable provide for ragged-school children—was rather a foolish business. Loo, with all her abruptness and roughness, was a dangerously interesting young person to the artistic mind—all the more interesting, perhaps, because so unconventional. There must be no repetition of this country drive, if he wished to marry Flora Chamney.

But did he wish to marry Miss Chamney? Of course he did—dear sweet little Flora, who was so fond of him. He had found out that secret ever so long ago. Pretty little Flora, whose voice went so well with his own, whose little hand trembled sometimes when he touched it unawares. Innocent little Flora, who was struggling up the steep mountain of art, with a box of crayons, chalking Gulnares and ancient beggarmen *ad nauseam*. Could he help loving that dear little girl, especially when Mark Chamney's desire upon this subject was so obvious?

For ten minutes or even a quarter of an hour, Mr. Leyburne gave himself up to serious meditation. They were at Kingston by that time, driving through the gay little market-town, with its quaint gables and old-world air; then down by the Thames, and onward towards Thames Ditton and Moulsey. Loo was gazing around with wide admiring eyes. The solemn avenue yonder skirting the Palace grounds, the clear rippling water, the pretty villas, all bright with tulip-beds and hyacinth-boxes, and early roses on southern walls; the cottage-gardens full of wall-flowers breathing sweetest odours. A world of beauty verily, after Voysey-street.

'Come, Loo,' said Mr. Leyburne, putting aside serious thought as a business that could stand over, 'it's almost time we began to think of halting somewhere. I mean to give you a row, as well as a drive. I know a nice little inn at Thames Ditton where they'll give us a comfortable dinner; and while they're getting it ready, I'll row you up to Hampton Court Bridge, and we can land there and take a stroll in the Palace gardens; it's early yet, and there's no hurry.'

'I wish the day could last for ever,' said Loo, with a sigh; 'everything is so lovely.'

'The drive home will be still nicer, for we shall have moonlight.'

'Yes, but it will be near the end then!'

They drove to the little inn—a quiet hostelry, almost unknown save to boating-men; here Walter delivered the horse to the care of a friendly ostler.

'You've taken it out of him pretty well, sir!' said the man.

'I've brought him down from London. I don't call that very much.'

'No more it ain't, sir; but he looks rather the worst for it.'

'Well, give him a pail of warm gruel, and make him as comfortable as you can. He won't be wanted till eight o'clock.'

'All right, sir!'

Walter went in quest of a boat. There were several lying on the little hard just in front of the inn-garden. He picked the lightest and brightest-looking, and presently they were gliding over the clear water towards Hampton, between banks that were all rustic, rush-bordered, willow-shaded. And now they began to talk; Walter dipping the sculls lazily into the water, the boat making slowest progress against the stream.

How he talked! pouring out every thought and fancy as freely as if Loo were his second-self, his twin-born spirit, with a mind that nature had attuned to his—she seemed to understand him so thoroughly, and all she said chimed in so well with his own thoughts.

What can surpass the delight of two minds thus in harmony? One long summer's day of careless talk, between such companions, is a memory to outlast all vulgar pleasures, and endure changeless through a lifetime. Walter Leyburne had never been happier than he was to-day, leaning forward with slow-dipping oars, reciting his dreams, his hopes, his desires to Louisa Gurner. They lingered on the river, careless of the flight of time; then landed and sauntered in the prim old-fashioned gardens, with their glorious avenues of blossoming chestnuts, their placid artificial waters, their famous basin of gold fish. Still the stream of talk flowed on, and time was forgotten.

'I wish I'd had a sister like you, Loo!' said Walter, as they stood side by side looking down at the smooth water in the Home Park on the other side of the iron rails. 'I'd have made you a painter, if you'd been my sister, and we should have been such chums!'

'You can make your wife a painter when you're married!' answered Loo, with a faint touch of bitterness; 'that pretty Miss Chamney you're engaged to—I've heard you say she paints very nicely.'

'Yes, she has talent, but it will be a long time before it comes to anything that I should call painting, and she hasn't so bold a mind as yours, Loo: she's not such a companion to a man as you are. One must sing duets, or talk about the last book she has read, to get on with her; but you seem to understand and sympathise with me about everything; you follow my thoughts everywhere, even when you have to grope through the dark. When I talked to you about Æschylus just now, I could see that you went with me into the dark hall where Agamemnon lay groaning in his bath. Flora would have only shuddered, and said "How dreadful!"'

'But she has been well educated, and must know a great deal more than I do.'

'She doesn't know a great deal of anything, but she knows a little of everything. She hasn't such deep thoughts as you have, Loo. Pray don't suppose that I mean to depreciate her; she is a

dear little thing, and clever too in her feminine way; she's essentially feminine. If all women were like her, no one could ever have talked of the equality of the sexes. You might as well talk of equality between the oak and the primrose that grows at its foot, as talk of Flora's equality with a rough strong man.'

'That sounds like high praise.'

'Yes, she is a sweet little thing. But you make a mistake, Loo, when you talk of my being engaged to Miss Chamney. I am not actually engaged to her.'

'Something very much like it though, I should think,' answered Loo. 'You talked as if it was a settled thing six months ago; and since then you've been always hanging about her, spending your evenings at her house.'

'Except when I've spent them in Voysey-street.'

'Except when you've dropped in to talk about pictures with father.'

'And stopped to supper, and acquired a depraved appetite for liver-and-bacon, and sausages, and tripe,' said Walter, laughing.

There was a cloud on Louisa's brow which he was anxious to disperse.

'Be sure of one thing, Loo,' he said; 'whether I marry Miss Chamney or whether I don't, I shall always be your true friend, and as anxious for your welfare as if you were my sister.'

'It's all very well to promise that,' answered Loo, with a sceptical air; 'but you can't tell how Miss Chamney would like it, when she's your wife. She mightn't care about such friends as me.'

'She would care for anyone I cared for.'

'That's as may be; she wouldn't care for any one out of Voysey-street; she wouldn't care for a person connected with second-hand clothes—it isn't likely. But don't let us talk of disagreeable things. Tell me something more about Skylous.'

'Æschylus!' suggested Walter; and obeyed the damsel's bidding. It was much pleasanter to discourse upon the mighty trilogy than to discuss that doubtful and perplexing question of his future relations with Flora Chamney and Louisa Gurner. He wished to do his duty to both, and please everybody. Rather a difficult achievement.

With the help of Agamemnon and Orestes pleasantness soon returned to their discourse; and forgetful of possible damage to the dinner ordered at the Black Swan, they dawdled under the chestnuts and in the quaint old garden, with its reminiscences of jovial Charles and Dutch William.

Mr. Leyburne, having abandoned Orestes to the Furies, gave Loo a brief historical lecture, on the strength of their surroundings, and felt that there was no easier or more agreeable labour than to open the gates of knowledge to a sharp-witted and sensible young person.

'I tell you what it is, Loo,' he said, 'you're what the Italians call *sympatica*, and it's the easiest thing in the world to get on with you. When I think how little you know and how much you understand, I'm absolutely thunderstruck.'

Loo blushed at his praise; and that bright youthful look which means happiness glowed in her face.

They were a long time strolling about the gardens, a long time going back to the boat, nor did Mr. Leyburne exert himself tremendously in the row back to the Swan. The sun was sloping westward as they landed on the little causeway below the inn-garden.

'Never mind the sun,' said Walter, when Loo suggested that it was growing late; 'we shall have the moon with us all the way home. The drive over Kingston Hill, on the old Portsmouth-road, is splendid by moonlight.'

All was very quiet at the Black Swan. The boating-men, who were the chief supporters of that river-side hostelry, were nowhere to be seen. Walter and Loo had the place all to themselves, as if they had been alone together in a world of their own. An elderly waiter exhibited an almost fatherly interest in their welfare, chid them gently for having occasioned the spoiling of an excellent dinner, and waited upon them with tender care.

Happily, neither Mr. Leyburne nor his companion cared very much whether the stewed eels were reduced to a pulpy condition, or the duckling roasted to rags. Walter had ordered a bottle of iced Moselle, which exhilarating beverage Louisa tasted for the first time. There was a gooseberry-tart with a jug of cream, which these young people preferred to the coarser dishes that had gone before. Altogether the dinner was a success—to one of them at least a paradisiacal banquet. They lingered over it as they had lingered over every stage of that day of pleasure. The fatherly waiter brought them a pair of wax-candles, and the moon shone in through the now open casement of the rustic parlour, while they were still engaged with that delicious gooseberry-tart, happily unconscious that they had perchance been taking gooseberries in another form in their Moselle.

Even gooseberry-tart and cream must come to an end. The parental waiter cleared the table with that gentle dilatoriness which was the pervading charm of his manner, removing the glasses one by one, and toying fondly with the crumbs as he brushed them into his tray. Loo went to the window and looked out. The placid river ran rippling by under the moonlight—how different from that dismal Phlegethon she had seen sometimes from Waterloo-bridge! —the opposite shore had a dusky look against the clear dark azure of the sky; shadowy willows dipping in the stream, solemn poplars rising spire-like into the blue.

'I'm afraid it's ever so late,' said Loo, in an alarmed tone,

looking round at Walter, who sat with his elbows on the table, staring straight before him, curiously thoughtful; 'how that Moselle makes one forget things! I never thought how the time was going.'

'Why should you think about it?' asked Walter, waking from his reverie. 'We are very happy, aren't we, Loo? What can anybody be more than happy? What can time matter to you and me?'

'But it does matter a good deal,' answered Loo anxiously. 'Grandma didn't say anything about the time I was to be home, and I forgot to ask her how long I might stay. But I know she'd be very angry if I was late; and goodness knows how father might go on about it. He's dreadful when he's angry.'

'He sha'n't be dreadful to you, Loo, if I'm by,' said Walter, looking at his watch, but taking care not to enlighten Louisa as to the hour, which was later than he had supposed. 'What time do your people go to bed?'

'All hours; sometimes eleven, sometimes twelve; sometimes ten, if father's cross. He generally goes to bed early if he's put out about anything.'

'We shall be home before twelve, I daresay, Loo,' answered Walter, trying to look unconcerned; he felt that he had been guilty in letting the time slip past. It hardly seemed a correct thing—even in a Bohemian state of society—to keep a young lady out till midnight.

'Before twelve!' exclaimed Loo, aghast. 'But that's dreadfully late; father's sure to be angry.'

'He shall not say a disagreeable word to you, Loo. I'll see him and explain everything.'

'If he'll listen to you,' said Loo, still frightened at the idea of parental wrath; 'but he's so violent when he's in one of his tempers, and doesn't care for any one.'

'I'll smooth him down, Loo, depend upon it. And now go and put on your things, while they get the trap round.'

Loo ran away to put on her bonnet and shawl, and Walter gave the order for the immediate preparation of the dog-cart. It was past ten already, and there was little hope of his seeing Voysey-street till after twelve.

Chapter XII.

'Love is no deity except when twin-born,
Sprung from two hearts, each yearning unto each,
Until they meet, though Hades yawned between them.
Thou art to me the world's one man, and I,
For good or ill, to thee the world's one woman.'

Having given his order, Mr. Leyburne went out into the garden to smoke a parting cigar. His thoughts had been curiously unsettled that afternoon; the cigar might have a soothing influence, and enable him to arrange his ideas better.

The air of the garden was perfumed with lilacs, guelder roses gleamed whitely in the dusk of the shrubberied border, the plish-plash of the river had a soothing sound—altogether a nice place for meditation and tobacco.

How happy he had been that day! What freshness and life there had been in Loo's companionship! Never for a moment had their talk flagged, save in those thoughtful pauses when silence is sweeter than words—never had he felt himself misunderstood. This was indeed society.

What if he were to shut his eyes to Loo's wretched surroundings and secure this companionship to himself for ever—make this day only the image and type of many a day to come—a lifetime of such days? Alas, there were too many reasons against his taking such a step! First, it is an almost impossible thing to sever a woman from her surroundings. To marry Loo would be to ally himself with grandma—grandma in her greasy gown; grandma whose breath hinted but too plainly at pickled onions, whose slipshod feet, dingy finger-nails, and affected gentility would be too heavy a burden even for affection—with Jarred; Jarred of doubtful honesty, doubtful cleanliness; Jarred the tricky and unscrupulous. From the thought of alliance with these Walter Leyburne recoiled with absolute horror.

In the second place he felt himself in a manner tacitly engaged to Flora. True that no word of love had ever passed between them; yet those gentle looks of hers, those gracious tones, were not the looks and tones of indifference. Could he, after all these months of happy fireside companionship, after being trusted by her father, coolly depart out of her life, and leave her, perhaps on the threshold of an awful parting—for Walter had seen the stamp of doom on Mark Chamney's face, and knew there must soon be severance for that devoted father and daughter—could he, knowing this, knowing how utterly lonely that poor child was, basely desert her, even if Bohemian Loo, with her gipsy cleverness, pleased his fancy better? He knew that Mark Chamney looked upon him as his future son-in-law. Mark, always transparent as crystal, had said enough to reveal that hope which had been in his mind from the very beginning of his acquaintance with the young painter. Flora would have a fortune about equal to his own; Chamney had told him that. There could be no question of mercenary feeling here. But to marry Loo would be to fling himself into a nest of adventurers. Even if Loo herself were free from every thought of greed, from every worldly consideration—and he was inclined to think her as indifferent to his wealth as Flora—could he doubt that Jarred and grandma, those advanced students in the school of poverty, were eager to draw him into their toils, and would pluck him mercilessly were he to fall into the snare?

It was a connection which any young man with a grain of com-

mon sense would avoid as he would shun the bottomless pit. And yet—and yet—what a noble creature Loo had looked to-night, as she stood by the open window looking out at the moonlit river! What power and genius in that darkly-pale countenance, those splendid eyes, the eyes which had inspired him with the first idea of his Lamia! The claret-coloured dress became her tall slim figure, harmonised wonderfully with her complexion, and the dense blackness of her hair. In that dress, in that careless attitude, so graceful in its unconscious repose, she had looked as much a lady as if her name had been written in Burke's *County Families*, her birthplace a baronial hall. Even her voice and manner of speaking had attuned themselves to his—she had lost the twang of Voysey-street.

'If she were my wife to-morrow I should be proud to show her to the world just as she is. No one would guess that she came out of a shop for second-hand gowns. If she and Flora were seen side by side, people would be more struck with her than with Flora; she has more style, more originality. She would look like a tropical flower beside an English primrose.'

With such musings Mr. Leyburne beguiled the time till the dog-cart was ready. The result of his meditation was almost negative. He felt himself very much where he was before. Loo pleased his fancy most, and an artist's fancy is so great a part of his life. Flora had the stronger claim upon his heart. Prudence said, 'Marry Flora.' Errant imagination whispered, 'With whom are you so happy as with Loo?' Duty urged, 'You are bound to Flora.' Conscience suggested, 'May you not have endangered Loo's peace of mind?'

He left the garden with an uncomfortable feeling that, do what he would, he must wrong somebody. That scheme of giving Loo a good education, upon which he had relied as a happy issue out of his difficulties, had been a failure. What else could he do to prove his friendship for this singular girl? If she would not accept education from him, she would of course reject all pecuniary help. She would take nothing from him; and he could not marry her. He must therefore leave her amidst the wretchedness in which he had discovered her, leave her with a keener appreciation of her misery.

Loo was waiting for him in the room where they had dined, and the dog-cart was ready. He had but a glimpse of her face as they went out through the lamplit door of the inn, but he saw that she was very pale, and he fancied he saw traces of tears upon the anxious-looking face.

'Come, Loo, don't be down-hearted,' he said; 'I thought you had more moral courage than to be afraid of a few cross words from your father, even if he should think we have stayed too late. I'll stand by you, come what may. Yes,' he added, with a little gush of feeling, as he settled her comfortably by his side in the dog-cart,

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"YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT."

nd wrapped her in the warm shaggy rug—'yes, dear, I'll be true o you, come what may.'

The words thrilled her. They had driven away from the inn, nd were in a narrow bit of road, a mere lane leading up from that aterside tavern to the high-road, a dark bit of lane, sheltered and hrouded by over-arching trees. His breath was on her cheek, his isengaged arm, which had been busy arranging that rug for her omfort, clasped her waist, and drew her suddenly to him. Before he knew what was coming, his lips were on hers, in the first kiss of a irresistible love.

In the next moment they were on the moonlit high-road, and Mr. Leyburne had concentrated his attention upon his horse.

'You shouldn't have done that,' said Loo, with a choking sound ke a sob, as she readjusted her slightly disorganised bonnet.

'Do you think I don't know that I shouldn't? It was almost ind as Paolo's kiss, and I deserve to float about in torment for it nd by—only with you, Loo. This shade should never leave O, Loo, why have you made yourself so dear to me? I want e my duty to you, to everybody. I am almost engaged to that r little girl in Fitzroy-square. I can't tell you how good she is, pure and innocent and confiding. I verily believe she thinks demi-god, and that she'd be miserable if I were to desert her.'

'Who wants you to desert her?' demanded Loo, in a hard dry e. 'I'm sure I don't. If you wished even—which of course you t—to make a fool of yourself for my sake, do you suppose I d let you? I know too much of the world for that, though I have brought up in Voysey-street. Don't let's talk nonsense any e, please, Mr. Leyburne. It was very mean of you to act like , just now; but I'm willing to pass it over, if it isn't repeated.'

'You say that almost like your grandmother, Loo. There's a ch of the old lady's dignity. I won't offend you again; it was the lt of the dark lane. But if you knew what I felt just then, I think 'd forgive me.'

'But I don't know, you see,' remarked Loo.

'I felt as if I could surrender all I care for most in the world for t one kiss—how much more easily for the sake of going through with you for my companion! I've been utterly happy to-day you, darling. And yet, if I am to marry Flora, this ought to r first and last day together. It's such a perilous happiness, I wouldn't wish the repetition of it.'

'If I'd thought you were going to talk to me like this, I wouldn't come with you,' said Loo.

How wildly her heart was beating all the time, and what exqui- e joy she felt at the avowal her lips reproved! They were driving ng the road between Thames Ditton and Kingston, the moonlit er flowing beside them; on the other side villas, with a light

gleaming here and there in upper windows, denoting that the inhabitants of this peaceful region had for the most part retired for the night.

The horse flagged a little already, and Mr. Leyburne had to administer frequent encouragement with reins or whip.

'I'm afraid this fellow's done up,' he said.

'Will he be very long getting us home?' asked Loo.

'I hope not. I daresay he'll go better presently when he feels his feet under him.'

And in this hope they proceeded at a very moderate pace towards Kingston.

Who would have wished to hasten that moonlight journey, through scenes which, always fair, assumed a dream-like beauty in this tender light? Not Louisa assuredly, fearful though she felt of her father's probable anger. Not Walter, for this present hour was to him supremely delightful. The future was all cloud and perplexity, but the present was all-sufficing. They drove through the silent market-town, where a light in the casement of a solitary gable alone gave token of life. They mounted the hill, and were again alone with nature. That Portsmouth road has a solemn look after sundown, densely wooded here and there, and with steep banks that rise from the roadside on either hand. Silence was round them; they had night and the world all to themselves. Walter's lips, once loosened, were not easily locked, and between Kingston and Putney he had said everything which he had intended to leave unsaid. All his wise reflections in the inn-garden went for nothing. He poured his impassioned tale of a love that had stolen upon him unawares into Loo's too willing ear. The girl drank the poison, but showed more firmness and wisdom than her lover. By not a word did she betray the depth of her own feelings.

'Upon my soul, you're as cold as ice, Loo,' he said at last, angered by her remonstrances or her silence; for she only spoke to reprove his folly. 'One would think you were hardened in the ways of the world, and hadn't a spark of feeling left. You might as well tell me if you care for me, or if I'm making an idiot of myself for nothing.'

'You sha'n't make me answer a question which you have no right to ask,' Loo replied resolutely. 'You promised to give me a day's pleasure in the country. Do you suppose I'd have come, if I'd known you were going on at me like this? It's mean of you. If I could get out of the dog-cart and walk back to London, I'd do it.'

'Don't talk like that, Loo; you don't know how it wounds me. I thought you cared for me—just a little. I shouldn't have humiliated myself if I hadn't thought so. Never mind; I won't say another word. I daresay Flora will marry me if I beg very hard.'

'Of course she will; and she is the proper person for you to marry. Nobody ever doubted that. And you know you love her, and think her like some innocent spring flower, white and pure and delicate, too tender to be left alone in the hard rough world,' said Loo with heroic unselfishness, reminding him of his own words.

'Very well, Loo, since you wish it I'll say no more,' he answered with dignity, and again devoted all his attention to the horse.

That tired steed was in such sorry condition, that it was nearly two o'clock when they drove slowly down Voysey-street, making an awful hollow-sounding clatter upon the uneven stones; Loo possessed by nameless fears. What would her father say to this post-midnight return? How might he not abuse her? Too well did she know that hideous vocabulary which he employed in moments of passion. She trembled as they drew near the house, from whose blank windows shone no friendly gleam of light.

There was no difficulty about holding the horse. That exhausted quadruped had little inclination to move, though he must have been sentient of the neighbourhood of his stable.

Walter dismounted and rang the bell, first cautiously, as to an ear awaiting the sound; then, after a pause, with a louder appeal; then still more loudly; but after ten minutes' patient expectation no one had come to open the door. Loo's white face looked at him mutely.

'Grandma must be asleep,' she faltered. 'You had better ring again.'

He had his hand upon the bell when the door opened suddenly with a jarring noise, and Jarred Gurner confronted him in a *negligé* costume that was remarkable neither for cleanliness nor elegance. A dark red-flannel shirt open at the brawny swarthy neck, a pair of trousers tied round the waist with dirty cotton braces, bare feet, and tousled hair denoted a hurried rising from his bed.

'Who's there?' he demanded, not without an expletive.

'Your daughter,' answered Walter. 'I'm sorry to have kept her out to such an unreasonable hour. We left Thames Ditton in capital time; but that beast of a horse was dead-beat.'

'*Who* did you say?' asked Jarred, regardless of the explanation.

'Come, Jarred, no nonsense. You're not going to be angry with your daughter for such a trifle—altogether my fault.'

'My daughter!' echoed Jarred, with a strident laugh. 'She's no daughter of mine. I don't deal in daughters who stay out with young men till two o'clock in the morning. Take the baggage away; he's no business in this house.'

'Father!' cried Loo, pushing past her defender, who had kept himself well in front of her till this moment; 'father!' she cried, with piteous appeal, 'you're not going to turn me out of doors; you're not going to ruin my good name for ever! Father!' with tones that

rose almost to a shriek as Jarred half shut the door against her, 'you can't mean to shut me out! What have I done to deserve it?'

'You best know that,' he answered. 'Let the gentleman who has kept you out till two o'clock find you a lodging in future.'

He shut the door with the last word. They heard the bolts pushed home, the rusty key turned, the chain put up—as if there were anything that needed the defence of bolts and bars in Jarred Gurner's domicile.

Loo stood aghast upon the doorstep. Her father had been less abusive than his wont; but he had done a thing which even her fears had never imagined.

'Never mind that brute,' said Walter, almost choking with anger. 'I'll take you to some respectable hotel. Don't be frightened, Loo. I'll take as much care of you as if I were your elder brother.'

The girl planted herself on the doorstep, deadly pale, and with an angry light in her eyes.

'I have a good mind to stay here all night,' she said. 'To think that he should turn against me like that—my own father! And I've always been so fond of him!'

'He's a beast,' exclaimed Walter; 'and I daresay he was drunk.'

'No, he was sober,' answered Loo; 'that's what I feel the hardest. If he'd been drinking, I shouldn't have minded so much; I could have borne it better. But he was quite cool—he didn't even use bad language. What can he think of me to treat me so?' demanded the girl passionately.

'I tell you, he's a beast,' repeated Walter, who could not get beyond that point. 'Don't let's worry ourselves about him. Jump into the dog-cart, Loo, and I'll drive you to some respectable hotel. There's a place I know in the Strand where they stop up late for travellers.'

'I won't stir out of Voysey-street,' cried Loo with determination. 'What! go away with you after what he said of me! I should like to stay on this doorstep all night, and for father to find me here to-morrow morning; but I suppose the policeman wouldn't let me. I'll knock up Mrs. Murgis at the general-shop. Mary Murgis and I went to school together at Miss Peminto's over the way, and I know Mary will give me a night's shelter.'

'What's the good of a night's shelter? You can never go back to that house again.'

'Can't I? It's the only home I have to go to. Do you think I'm going to be turned out of it in disgrace? I'll go back the first thing to-morrow morning, please God, and have it out with father.'

'I tell you, Loo, it's impossible,' cried the young man warmly. 'Go back to that man's house after the insult he has just put upon you! You sha'n't do it. I told you I would be true to you, come

what might. You shall never cross that threshold again, Loo. I'll take lodgings for you to-morrow.'

'I've heard of that before,' said Louisa in a freezing tone. 'I've heard of people having lodgings taken for them, and sometimes of its going so far as a brougham and a pug-dog. I'd rather not, thank you!' with asperity.

Not a wild-wood blossom by any means, this young woman; not a snowdrop, whose petals no poisonous breath had ever polluted; but stanch and pure after her own fashion.

'Loo!' cried Walter indignantly, 'do you think I am a scoundrel? Do you suppose I could be guilty of one unworthy thought in such an hour as this?'

'I beg your pardon, Mr. Leyburne. I daresay you're good and true,' the girl answered remorsefully; 'only I feel as if the world was all wickedness—when my own father, that I've worked and slaved for ever since I was a child, can cast me out.'

'You sha'n't go back to his house, Loo. Get a night's shelter from Miss—what's her name?—if you like. You shall go to a boarding-school to-morrow. You'll be safe there. And I'll go and tell your father where you are, and that you've done with him.'

'Done with him!' the girl echoed plaintively. 'There was a time when I thought the world was only father.'

Walter lost no time in knocking up Mrs. Murgis at the general-shop. It was a dingy passage enough into which he and Loo were admitted when Mrs. Murgis arose from dreams and came down to answer that importunate bell, sorely troubled by fears of fire, or ill-news from her married daughter at Ball's-pond. But Mrs. Murgis was kind, and listened to Loo's sad tale with sympathetic 'tut-tuts' and 'you don't say so's,' and said that she could have half Mary's bed, and welcome; and thus Loo was safely disposed of for the night.

'You shall go to boarding-school to-morrow, whether you like it or not, Loo,' said the young man eagerly, at parting. 'I look upon your father's infamous conduct as providential. Even your obstinacy can't hold out any longer.'

'I'll go to school if you like,' answered Loo despondently. 'It'll make things smooth, anyhow, and make the way clear for you to marry the young lady in Fitzroy-square. It can't much matter to anybody what becomes of me, when my own father doesn't care.'

'But it does matter very much to me, Loo,' said Walter.

They were in the dark passage just at the foot of a steep little staircase, which good-natured Mrs. Murgis had ascended to prepare for the unexpected guest, and Walter felt sorely tempted to repeat that sin of the shadowy lane at Thames Ditton; but if it had seemed to Loo a meanness then, it would surely seem meaner now. He refrained, therefore, and only pressed her hand with an honest brotherly squeeze.

'Come what may, Loo,' he said impressively, 'remember I've promised to be true to you.'

And with that pledge he bade her 'good-night,' and went back to the patient quadruped, languishing for his stable.

Chapter XIII.

'Spring still makes spring in the mind
When sixty years are told;
Love wakes anew this throbbing heart,
And we are never old.
Over the winter glaciers
I see the summer glow,
And through the wild-piled snowdrift
The warm rose-buds below.'

Branscomb is not a fashionable watering-place; there is neither pier nor band, nor has any joint-stock company yet been found eager to experiment on the capabilities of the situation by the erection of a monster hotel eight stories high, with Louvre windows commanding the wide-stretching Channel and distant Atlantic. Branscomb still languishes in obscurity; no speculative charlatan has discovered the peculiar balm of its atmosphere, and published it to the world as an elysium in whose calm breast lurk healing and the renewal of life. Branscomb produces nothing except a little lace—the patient work of women and children—is celebrated for nothing. Nobody, in the accepted sense of the word, was ever born at Branscomb. The name of the village figureth not in the Biographical Dictionary. Nothing ever comes from Branscomb. There is not so much as a ruined castle, historically famous, in the shadow of whose walls the frivolous may picnic. One dilapidated martello tower alone marks the landscape. Why built, it is rather difficult to imagine; for it is hardly within the limits of the possible that any hostile invader would ever essay to land at Branscomb. The cliffs are bold and high, of a dark-red clay, rugged and crumbling-looking, as if of so loose a fabric that they might slip down into the ocean at any moment with briefest warning. Irregular in outline, grandly picturesque, is that western seaboard, while the inland landscape is fair as paradise.

Fishing is the chief, or indeed the only, resource of Branscomb. The village proper, the original Branscomb, is but a collection of fishermen's huts and a public-house or two. That Branscomb which visitors affect, and which calls itself a watering-place, boasts a little bit of Parade, bounded by a roughly built sea-wall, a dozen or so of smallish, lowish houses, with bow-windows, much wooden balcony and verandah, and gardens abutting on the Parade. On the higher ground beyond this spot certain adventurous builders, oppressed with the builder's speculative propensity and with no

more promising field for its exercise, have tacked on a few meagre villas, standing desolate in quarter-acre enclosures, which neither cultivation nor climate has educated into gardens. There is the beginning of a terrace—five slim bow-windowed houses breasting the stormy winds on the rise of a hill; houses inhabited by the wealthier of the fishermen, whose wives and families subside into kitchens and outhouses whenever Fortune favours them with lodgers. All the year round the fly-blown cards hang in the parlour-windows, but only in the glare and blaze of the summer solstice come visitors to Branscomb. Then perchance a few families from Long Sutton enliven the scene: troops of noisy children, who revel on the beach and scare the seagulls with their still harsher voices; a pair or two of maiden sisters, who pace meekly up and down the narrow path atop of the rugged cliff, and sniff the briny breezes from the Atlantic, and congratulate themselves on the acquisition of a store of health, to be put away, like the household linen or the best glass and china, for future use.

Ocean's strand at Branscomb is hard and stony. There is no stretch of level sand for the delight of youth and infancy, no chalky cave where young mothers can sit and gossip and make pinafores, while their little ones raise those frail and perishable castles which seem fit types of future endeavour and its vain result. The friendly homely beauties of Ramsgate and Broadstairs are not here; but in their stead a certain wild picturesqueness, a certain rugged grandeur, not without its charm.

The Branscomb season—that halcyon period when the Parade and the five villas and the six houses in the terrace are wont to brim over with human life, and the local butcher will display as many as six legs of mutton pendent from his grim array of iron hooks on a Saturday morning—had not yet begun. The local grocer, stationer, linen-draper, and fancy-repositor had not yet ordered his summer stock of one-dozen pairs buff boots, thirteen as twelve. The two bathing-machines which enjoyed a monopoly of the Branscomb bathers still hibernated in the darkness of their winter shed. In a word, Branscomb had not yet awakened. Mr. Topsaw, the Long Sutton auctioneer, land-surveyor, and house-agent, had therefore ample room and verge enough for his selection of a house adapted to the requirements—to use Mr. Topsaw's familiar phrase—of a gentleman of property and his daughter, and affording accommodation for the gentleman of property's friends. Under these fortunate circumstances, Mr. Topsaw naturally chose the most expensive of the villas, and took care to inform the proprietress thereof that terms were not a consideration to the gentleman of property; his own profit by the transaction being five per cent on the entire rental, to say nothing of the promise of a sovereign down on the nail, which Mr. Topsaw extorted from the lone widow who kept the

stuccoed villa of the Italian gothic order, surmounted by
panile tower, whose sides were open to the winds of hea
whose roof had been copied from the tender simplicity o
tinguisher. The house stood higher than its neighbours, o
that ascended gradually from the low-lying village to the
the cliff, divided from its margin by a cornfield. There w
den, or arid tract of land, which grew wall-flowers, stocks,
herbage that passed for grass, and in their due season n
and mignonette; one lonely monthly rose languished
the stuccoed wall, and by way of wood a belt of scanty b
the coniferous or sea-side tribe, shaped like the plumes th
a hearse, had been planted within the open iron-rail that
the grounds from the dusty road. This domain, which
boast as much cedar as would have made a pencil, nev
derived its name from that stately tree, and was called the

Remote and solitary as the place was, it enchanted Fl
was at least different from Fitzroy-square; that vast sweep
with its infinite variety refreshed her eye as water-pools re
traveller in Arabian deserts. She declared herself enraptu
showered grateful kisses upon her father's grizzled hair,
by the drawing-room window—the summer merit of the Ce
sisted in its walls being almost entirely window—and res
a fifteen-miles' coach-journey from Long Sutton.

'How good of you to come here, papa,' she exclaimed; '
clever of you to think of Branscomb, instead of letting me
off to Brittany or somewhere, tiring you to death with s
and rails, and diligences, and goodness knows what! I sho
this must be quite as good as Brittany—as wild, and gr
picturesque. Of course there are cathedrals there, and

sad foreboding of sorrow to come had been creeping gradually home to her loving heart; the fact of her father's altered health had become a stern reality beyond his power of concealment. That he was weaker than of old, more easily tired, more subject to pain, were bitter truths he could no longer hide from the keen eyes of love. But the worst Flora knew not. She knew not that her father's life hung by a thread, and that any moment of the long summer day might be his last. She thought him changed, grown so much older in one short year, but she tried to believe that this was but the natural decline of the strong man's life, only the beginning of a long old age. Night and day she prayed God to spare him—to spare him for years to come, for all the days of her life; she could not imagine her life without him. Was it possible she could live, leave him lying in his narrow grave, hidden from the sunshine and the glory of the universe, and go on living, and even find some kind of happiness without him? She remembered one of the girls at Miss Mayduke's, whose father had died suddenly, and who had come back to school a few weeks afterwards in her black frocks. She had cried a good deal at first, in the dismal twilight interval between the studies, and at night in the dormitory; but her tears seemed to dry quickly enough, and she learnt her lessons, and ate her dinner, and looked forward to the holidays, just the same as the rest, and her voice soon grew loud and clamorous in the playground, like the other voices.

Dr. Ollivant enjoyed Branscomb almost as heartily as Flora. He seemed a new man now that he had escaped from the scientific atmosphere of Wimpole-street; all the more so, perhaps, because he had also escaped from the society of Walter Leyburne, whose demonstrative youth had weighed him down a little, perpetually suggesting unpleasant comparisons, continually reminding him how he had let youth and all its opportunities of happiness slip by. A bitter thought, that, of one crisis in our lives when supreme happiness was just within our reach, and by the sheer perversity and triviality of youth we let it slip. A thought to brood over in after years with deepest remorse, with grief unspeakable; yes, verily, 'a sorrow's crown of sorrow.'

But Dr. Ollivant's memory could recall no such hour. He only reflected that youth was a wonderful and beautiful thing, and that he had sacrificed it upon the altar of science. He had put aside his youth altogether—bartered it, like Esau's birthright, for *his* favourite mess of pottage. He had won the great race by this very sacrifice; had outstripped the footsteps of his contemporaries, and placed himself in the ranks of eminent and successful men, who were from ten to twenty years his senior. Only he had paid the price. He had never allowed himself the relaxations or the affections of youth.

Not until of late had the knowledge of his loss come home to

him. But seeing what a bright thing youth appeared in this stranger he began to ask himself whether he had not been cheated out of a gift that was almost divine.

'If I had known Flora Chamney ten years ago,' he thought 'if Fate had made us contemporaries, how different my life might have been!'

There were moments—brief intervals of infatuation no doubt—in which he used to ask himself if it were really too late; if he might not yet enter the lists with this younger and more attractive rival. Nothing definite had been said as yet; he knew that from Mark. The young man had hung back somewhat strangely, as it seemed to the fond father.

'And yet I'll answer for it he loves her,' said Mark, in his impetuous way.

'He would be something less, or more, than human if he did not,' answered the doctor.

But that purblind father drew no inference from the speech. He had set his heart upon seeing Walter and Flora married. The union would be perfect, like a marriage in a fairy tale. The idea that human passion could stir the breast of this grave pale doctor, with his deep-set thoughtful eyes, never entered Mr. Chamney's mind.

The doctor made the most of his holiday. After all, happiness is a thing of the present, and a man might be happy the day before his execution if the companion his soul loved dearest cheered him in his lonely cell. They chartered a fishing-boat, put up a rough awning to shelter them from the sun, and sailed merrily over those blue waters from after breakfast till dinner-time. When Mark was tired they made him lie down upon a luxurious bed of sail-cloth and carriage-rugs, and Flora read Shelley or Browning to him.

'I can't say I quite understand what they're driving at,' he said, 'but it's certainly soothing.' Whereupon he would compose himself to slumber; and then, after a couple of pages or so, Flora would tire of Alastor, or Epipsychidion, and close her book, and talk to Dr. Ollivant.

It was curious to discover how little the doctor knew or cared about those modern singers, with whose music Walter Leyburne was so familiar. But then, on the other hand, he had read Shakespeare and some of his contemporaries with profoundest love, and had Homer in his heart of hearts.

'I thought you never read anything but medical and scientific books?' the girl said wonderingly, after he had opened the treasure-house of his memory for her entertainment.

'I very rarely do now. I had a passion for those Elizabethan poets when I was a lad, and for Homer. I think I half lived in the old Greek world—a fairyland of dreams—till I began to see that science is something nobler than the memory of the past. I have

Shakespeare and Homer in my consulting-room, and take down a volume once in a way, when I am more than usually tired; but that doesn't happen often. The inconvenience I most suffer from is want of time, not flagging attention; though, by the way, my thoughts have gone astray sorely lately.' He said these last words with a regretful look at that innocent young face turned to him so frankly. Ah, what pain she gave him by that too candid friendliness, which told him he might be never more than friend!

'Of course,' exclaimed Flora eagerly, 'you are over-worked; papa is always saying so. See what harm he has done himself by working so hard in the prime of his life, though he will get over all that, and grow quite strong again by and by, please God. You ought not to slave like that, Dr. Ollivant. It is all very well when one is young, but as one grows older—'

'I promise to relax my labours somewhat when I am old,' said the doctor; 'but I can hardly claim the privilege of age yet awhile. Ancient as I doubtless appear to your young eyes, I am not forty.'

'Indeed!' said Flora. She had the vaguest estimate of the various stages of life—whether a man were old at forty or only began to be old at sixty. In her juvenile imagination life after thirty was but a downhill progress. Youth and good looks, with most things that sweeten life, disappear behind the crest of that hill which youth climbs so gaily. She could hardly imagine what the journey was like on the other side. She wondered a little at the doctor's half-complaining tone, as he must surely have put away all youthful aspirations ever so long ago.

'Was it too late?' he asked himself sometimes, with a wild flash of hope.

She listened with rapt attention when he talked to her. His conversation at least could charm her. She was even interested in his career—curious about that laborious youth which he had spent in parish drudgery or in foreign hospitals. Then he opened his heart and mind for her, and painted a life that was not altogether unheroic, not without some human interest; but not a whisper, not a breath of youth's enchantment, nothing of love or woman's loveliness.

Once, deeming him so far removed from herself by reason of his advanced years, she was bold enough to ask a question that to him was startling:

'In all you tell me, you have never mentioned—' she began rather shyly, and then was obliged to reconstruct her sentence: 'I wonder that in all your travels you never met any one—whom you—whom you cared for well enough to marry.'

He looked at her with that strange half-bitter look whose meaning she could not read.

'Curious,' he said, 'wasn't it? Curious that I didn't tread the

beaten track: fall in love with some respectable young woman at twenty; marry at twenty-three; go back to Long Sutton, and set up as a family practitioner; walk in the footsteps of my father, in short; and look forward with placid resignation to the day when my name should be written under his on the family tombstone. I daresay after all that is the happiest manner of life, if modern youth could only put aside its passionate aspirations for something better. After all, are not the lives of all men written in water? Our petty struggles to win fame are, for the most part, futile, or the reward of our labours as perishable as the Grecian's crown of wild olive. Yet perhaps a doctor, whose life is in a manner a hand-to-hand conflict with the great mystery of pain, may take a purer pleasure out of his smallest victories than the man who wastes his nights in verse-writing, or his days in painting pictures which could have been painted better three hundred years ago. *Our* profession,' with some touch of pride, 'is at least progressive.'

'It is a noble profession,' said Flora, 'and I don't wonder you are proud of it. But please don't run down our poor painters, even if Raffaelle and Titian did paint better. They had popes, and emperors, and people, you know, to encourage them. I hope you don't despise painters.'

'Hardly. Yet, I confess there seems to me something rather ignoble in any profession which produces only ornament—a life entirely given to the cultivation of fancy.'

'But you haven't told me why you didn't marry?'

'First, because I put the marriage question out of my mind altogether when I took up the profession of medicine.'

'What, made up your mind to be an old bachelor!'

'No; but made up my mind to succeed in my profession before I ventured to contemplate the idea of marriage.'

'Ah,' said Flora, with a compassionate sigh, 'that was a pity, because—'

'Because what?' he asked, when she stopped in the middle of her sentence.

'Because it takes such a long time to succeed in any profession, and—please don't be offended if I say anything that sounds rude—by the time a man has succeeded, he must be an old bachelor.'

'An old bachelor! I suppose, now, in your mind that means anyone on the wrong side of thirty?'

'Why, yes; at Miss Mayduke's we used to call thirty old; but I daresay that's only a schoolgirl's notion.'

'Do you think it quite preposterous, now, for a man of my age, much nearer forty than thirty, to have some idea of marriage?'

'Not at all,' she exclaimed eagerly, and a gleam of gladness shone into the doctor's dark eyes, 'provided you married a suitable person.'

The pleased look faded as quickly as it had come.

t do you mean by a suitable person? Some one of my own
pose.'
our own age, or a few years younger. Not an old maid,
reeable prim ways, or a cat and a parrot; but some charm-
. There was a widow who had two daughters at Miss
; her husband had been in the China trade—silk, or tea,
ing. She used to dress so stylishly.'
ks. I abhor stylish widows. If I were forced to make an
tween two evils, I would rather have the old maid with her
arrot. I should have a greater chance of peace. No,
ill never marry, unless—'
ss what?'
ss I can love, and be loved again.'
twirled the leaves of her book, and gave another little
nate sigh, faint as the summer breath that stirs a fallen

nfatuated man! She was really sorry for him. As if any
win all the brightest things of earth, and, after having
youth to the swift race for fame, turn back and say, 'O,
desire the joys of the rose-garden!' Why, the end of the
him far off in the bleak desert, the shingly Patagonian
iddle age, where there is no rose-garden.
lt a curious, half-scornful, half-tender pity for the grave
r this, and thought more of him and his lonely life than
hought until now, wondering whether he would ever see
a suitable age, whom he could like; trying to imagine
of sentiment love must be between people who were past
ether the gentleman would write romantic love-letters, and
ould blush and tremble at his footsteps just the same as
She could not imagine anything so incongruous as middle
mance; she could only picture the courtship a business
, the marriage a sober prosaic affair, the bride dressed
ay silk. Feeling therefore the utter impossibility of the
r finding his way back to the rose-garden, she was par-
nd to him—dangerously, fatally kind—for she inflamed
to fever-point.

HOW MR. PENLAKE EXERCISED A PROCTOR

In the year of grace 18—, it pleased the ancient house of Cong gation of the University of Oxford to enact in dog-Latin—which c of mercy to the scholastic instincts of our readers we forbear quote—that, whereas candidates for 'responsions' (vulgarly call 'smalls,' or the 'little-go' examination) hitherto had paid a fee one pound for the privilege of running their chance of being plucke in future the University would charge one guinea to each underg duate who should offer himself to 'respond'—whatever 'respondi may mean.

Shortly after the promulgation of this solemn decree, which, the way, occupied about half a column of the *Times*, a notice w issued to the effect that the Junior Proctor would attend in the h of —— College, between the hours of one and two on the followi Friday, in order to receive the names of candidates for responsio who were required to adduce certain papers as evidences of th identity, sanity, and membership of the University.

Obediently to this summons, some three hundred youths, attir in academicals, congregated in and about the hall aforesaid, wher on the daïs was seated the Junior Proctor, engaged in the thankl task of latinising the homely *prænomina* of Joneses, Smiths, a Robinsons.

'Your name, sir, and college, sir?' snapped the official at a stripling.

'Herbert Maurice Smith of Wadham,' was the intelligible re Whereupon down went the young man's name as Herbertius Ma tius Smith è Collegio Wadhamiensi. 'Smith,' you will rem being incapable of latinisation, was permitted to remain in al native cacophony.

'A guinea, sir,' observed the Proctor perfunctorily; and Smith, having come provided with a sovereign and a shilling, po it down smilingly, and departed, devoutly hoping that the exami would overlook his very Oxonian Euclid, and exceedingly gentlem arithmetic—his exercises in the latter science having hitherto b almost wholly confined to the study of 'odds,' and the mysterie book-making in general.

To him succeeded a young gentleman, whose sporting costu contrasted most strangely with that curtailed caricature of the Benedictine habit partially covering his shoulders. He announ himself briefly as Mr. Richard Penlake of Brazenface College; wh

respectable patronymic, after being duly amplified to suit the mediæval proclivities of the University, was written down carefully by the Proctor. Looking over the dignitary's shoulders to see that there was no mistake about it, and being satisfied with the accuracy of the entry, Mr. Penlake proceeded to pull carelessly a sovereign out of his trousers-pocket. Then he flung it magnificently on the table with the air of a man paying away money which was not of the slightest consequence.

'A guinea, if you please,' remarked the Proctor, looking rather foolish at the sovereign, and perhaps a trifle angrily at Mr. Penlake.

'The fee's a pound,' replied that gentleman coolly.

'The fee, sir,' retorted the Proctor deliberately, 'is a guinea.'

'But,' urged Mr. Penlake, appealing to his brother students, who were crowding round the table, 'I've always been *used* to pay a pound.'

At this sally there arose a complete roar of laughter. Mr. Penlake was well known as a gentleman who had made very heavy efforts to 'respond' satisfactorily, but hitherto without success. In fact, he had already paid many pounds to an unkind University, which does not return fees to those whom the examiners in their discretion think fit to reject.

'Silence!' cried the Proctor, rising angrily from his seat. Then turning to Mr. Penlake, 'A shilling if you please, or I shall erase your name from the list.'

Mr. P. fumbled first in one pocket, then in the other; but, although he found several pipes handy, he did not seem to be possessed of either silver, gold, or notes. In his perplexity he faced right about, addressing himself incontinently to every one:

'Look here. This is my last chance for smalls. I wish one of you fellows would lend me a shilling.'

In a trice a dozen hands proffered the needful coin. Whereupon Mr. Penlake, ejaculating 'Thanks!' clutched at the nearest, and then with great gravity deposited it by the side of the sovereign on the table.

'Next time, sir,' observed the Proctor sarcastically, 'you will remember—*a guinea*.'

'*Next time*, sir,' rejoined Mr. Penlake, 'I propose to give the University of Cambridge a turn.'

Whereat the audience grinned—the general impression being that, unlike 'Adolphus Smalls' of the famous ballad, he would be plucked again, even though he might 'put on coaches three,' and 'read all night with towelled head.' Mr. Penlake himself thought otherwise, and as he strolled back to his college, he registered a solemn vow that when he had secured his testamur, or certificate of having passed, he would take his revenge on that sharp-tongued Junior Proctor who had raised the laugh against him, not altogether unsuccessfully.

For Mr. Penlake, though exceedingly idle, and in debt, and impecunious, we must not regard as a dunce. The great Sir Robert Peel, the present Lord Chancellor, and a host of other celebrities have been *ploughed* for this same examination, and yet subsequently have attained to the most exalted academical distinction. A 'pluck' often operates favourably in taking the conceit out of young persons, who at school have been so worshipped as paragons that they have already begun to deify their own very ordinary brains. Nor is a 'pluck' in any case to be regarded as a disgrace. It remains on record that three undergraduates of one of our best colleges, all three being men of the highest social position, achieved no less than twenty-seven plucks between them. Each of these gentlemen is now a beneficed clergyman, highly respected, and occupying a sphere of wide usefulness. In short, their early failures have not one whit impaired their subsequent well-merited success in life. No doubt they often laugh over their hard-fought battles with the examiners. *Forsan et hæc olim meminisse juvabit.*

To return to Mr. Penlake. This little brush with proctorial authority put him on his mettle. Of course the story of how he had *always been used* to pay one pound spread like wildfire over the University, where men will subsidise you for any *bon mot*, which will serve to fire-off at a wine or a breakfast, provided that it be quite fresh, and safe to raise a laugh. In the merriment occasioned by his words no one joined more heartily than their author; but perhaps he felt all the more acutely that he would be singularly stultified if he missed his mark in the Schools. Hence he set to work with a will; to him Sunday was as a working day, night as morning. He cut all parties, eschewed liquors, from champagne down to small-beer, and the outcome of such energy was, that he got his previous reading into ship-shape; and when once in the cockpit, and face to face with the string of ugly questions, so effectually floored the papers, that he was let off with a minimum of *vivâ-voce*, and departed from the Schools bespattered with the cold compliments of his ancient persecutors, who congratulated him both on the quantity and quality of his work most condescendingly.

'Now,' said Mr. Penlake, as he accepted his testamur from Purdue, bearing the autographs of two individuals whom he had cause enough to abhor—'now, to serve out my friend the Junior Proctor.'

About the date of this veracious history a certain M. Lecocq had just retired from the honourable office of cook of Boniface College. Whether he and the then Master agreed to differ, this deponent sayeth not; suffice it, that M. Lecocq transferred his artistic ability from Boniface kitchen to a restaurant in the High-street, which straightway became the place for the juvenile gourmet to eat, and learn what art can effect. M. Lecocq found his enterprise rather more arduous than he had anticipated. The Vice-Chancellor of the

was a very stately courteous gentleman; but not at all dis-
to relax academical discipline. He it was who, when Mr.
eray requested permission to deliver his lectures on 'The Four
es' within the precincts of the University, asked the great
, innocently enough, who he was, and what work he had
.

am the author of *Vanity Fair*,' replied Thackeray.

Vanity Fair!' exclaimed the Vice-Chancellor; 'a dissenting
ution I presume.'

e good man, not being a novel-reader, imagined that the
st work of that period was a tract. However, if severe upon
ild of letters, the great don could also wield the rod of office
t another branch of art with rigour. Gastronomy to him was
ul as fiction. Hence, shortly after the institution of the Res-
t Lecocq, he was down upon its talented proprietor.

understand,' said he, 'that you have infringed the statute
provides that no person shall sell to any member of this Uni-
, being *in statu pupillari*, cooked meats.'

'ou vould not have me serve ze gentlemans vid raw?' urged
nsieur, by way of defence.

hereunto the Vice-Chancellor responded by inflicting a fine,
in University parlance 'a sconce,' and M. Lecocq departed,
may imagine, tolerably disgusted with this specimen of offi-
ranny.

w it happened on the return of M. Lecocq from his interview
he Vice-Chancellor that he encountered Mr. Penlake, whose
s were exuberant with joviality, waving in triumph his tes-

ook here, Lecocq,' he cried; 'look at these autographs—very
Talk about the autographs of Shakespeare, Milton, Guy
s, Oliver Cromwell, and all those kind of people—they're
g to these, simply *nothing*. Lecocq, I must dine—sump-
, mind you—all the delicacies of the season—expense no
—seven o'clock—you understand.'

en, without waiting for the worthy Frenchman's reply, Mr.
e darted away, and was soon buried in the recesses of a hair-
's establishment, from whence he emerged, after a time, car-
largish brown-paper parcel.

xt he wended his way towards the establishment of a well-
tailor, where he exchanged his commoner's for a scholar's
to the utter amazement of the honest tradesman, who, to
s own phraseology, 'Allers guv Muster Penlake *credit* for
gennelum, but not for being a schollard.' The credit part
business was, we fear, only too true, inasmuch as our hero
ed two pages and a half of a large ledger, the total being in
figures. A warm bath, a glass of bitters, a shampoo, and a

game of billiards made up the time to seven o'clock, when Mr. Penlake duly presented himself at the door of M. Lecocq's establishment in the classic High-street.

'Dinner, sir?' said the waiter. 'Yessir. Fust pair, left.'

Up-stairs lumbered Mr. Penlake, very hungry indeed, and most anxious to do full justice to the best dinner in Oxford. He thought he heard a titter on the stairs, but it didn't disturb him. The room looked bright and cheerful, and his feelings were those of a man at peace with all the world except the Junior Proctor.

'What will you drink, sir?' asked the waiter, returning with something approaching a grin on his features.

'Sham, Charles, sham—dry—that'll do to begin with. And, I say, Charles, look sharp.'

Again a titter. However, Charles rapidly reappeared with the seductive fluid, the cork of which he drew deliberately. Then he remarked with an effort at *sang froid:*

'M. Lecocq, sir, sorry, sir; no soup, sir. Will you have up the salmon, sir?'

An expletive was on the tip of Mr. Penlake's tongue, but he suppressed it, intimating that he didn't care what they brought him so long as they did not keep him waiting.

Clank, clank of the plates, and, *presto!* the salmon was on the table, and Charles out of the room, laughing as he went rather explosively.

'What the doose!' ejaculated Mr. Penlake, as he endeavoured to help himself with the fish-slice, which somehow would not penetrate. 'What the doose! Why I'm dashed if it isn't raw!'

With a bound he rushed to the bellrope and pulled till it yielded with a crack. He was about to inflict summary chastisement on the luckless Charles, whose voice was heard outside the door convulsed with merriment, when, with a serious countenance, enter no less a personage than M. Lecocq.

'*Plait-il, M'sieur?*' imperturbably.

'Look here—I say—this is some confounded practical joke of Charles's.'

'Not so, sare. I 'ave been, as you say, sconzed by your Vize-Chanzellor. He say that I musd not geef ze gentlemans *cooked* meads. Zo I obey ze statudes, and I geef them *raw!* Zo!'

'But I can't make myself into a cannibal or a German,' exclaimed Mr. Penlake; 'and I'm doosed hungry, upon my honour I am, Lecocq.'

'You musd obey ze statudes of ze Univairsité.'

'Hang the statutes! I suppose my good friend, the Junior Proctor, has hauled you up before the Vice, eh?'

'Yace,' answered Lecocq. 'It vos 'im.'

Whereupon Mr. Penlake took monsieur by the button-hole, and

ommenced confidences which caused much laughter to both speaker nd listener. In fact he was revealing his project of playing a prac-cal joke on this very Proctor whose officiousness had caused M. ecocq to be mulcted.

'Goot, goot, vare goot!' shouted the Frenchman. 'Yace, yace, ou shall 'ave some cooked meads for dinner—in faive minits, Mees-er Penlake. Bud you muzd pay ze sconze if you are caught in he act of eating ze mead which is not raw.'

'That's a bargain,' was the ready reply.

Accordingly, within the stated five minutes, Charles, with the umblest apologies, was engaged in serving Mr. Penlake with a elicious *menu*. The soup was discovered, salmon appeared done a turn, *entrées* succeeded, and, in one word, repletion was attained ithin five-and-forty minutes after feeding commenced.

To champagne succeeded claret, curaçoa, coffee, cigars. By e time that Great Tom of Christ Church was booming away his undred-and-one discords, to announce that it was past nine o'clock, d the number of students on Wolsey's Foundation had not yet een altered by the authority of Parliament, Mr. Penlake was plea-nt, jovial, perhaps larky, but certainly not inebriate. A soda-and-andy caused him to rise just one degree further in the direction liveliness, after which he declared himself as 'altogether fit,' and cordingly proceeded to prepare for action.

First, he took his innocent trencher-cap, and smashed it to a jelly.

Secondly, he slewed his tie round to the back of his ear.

Thirdly, he extracted from the before-mentioned brown-paper arcel a beard and moustache of copious dimensions, with which ppendages he invested his own smooth downless countenance. hen he superimposed the battered cap, doffed the scholar's gown, d lighted a fresh cigar, carefully scenting himself by sprinkling andy over his beard, linen, and clothes.

Having surveyed his appearance in the looking-glass, and being tisfied that he simulated intoxication successfully, he rang the ell and dispatched a messenger to inform him when the Junior roctor was going his rounds.

We may inform the non-academical reader that Proctors are responsible magistrates, who, in our two University towns, can ter houses forcibly, dispense with *habeas corpus*, and commit eople to prison without the formula of a trial. These privileges ey exercise most freely after dark. Hence their habit of peram-ulating the town by gaslight, attended by a *posse comitatus* termed ppropriately 'bulldogs.'

After waiting nearly an hour, Mr. Penlake's outpost advised him at the Proctor was sheering down the street, having just benevo-ntly stepped into the Mitre to stop a quiet supper party.

On receipt of this intelligence, our hero staggered forth ir

street and, affectionately embracing the nearest lamp-post, vocife rated a popular melody, in order to secure attention.

Authority, thus challenged, hove down promptly upon him Nothing daunted, Mr. Penlake continued his ditty in thoroug maudlin fashion, stopping only to whiff his cigar, which, as all th world knows, is a luxury regarded by the University as somewha more immoral than any of the mentioned sins in the Decalogue.

'Your name and college, sir?' asked the Proctor sternly.

Mr. Penlake muttered thickly and inaudibly, blowing the smo in the inquirer's face.

'Your name, sir; and college, sir?'

'Ben'l—Wooshter,' was the reply.

'Bennel of Worcester, do you say?'

'Schpel it with a P, old boy,' answered the hardened Mr. Penlak

'Pennel. Then, Mr. Pennel, what business have you to in this disgusting state of intoxication? Go home to your colleg sir, and call upon me at ten o'clock to-morrow morning.'

'I think, sir,' murmured the Marshal, as the chief bulldog termed, 'that the gentleman is—hum—ha—is unable to take ca of himself.'

This indeed seemed likely, as Mr. Penlake continued to cli incontinently to the lamp-post, as if he needed its support.

'We had better take him to Worcester,' answered the Procto by no means in a tone as if he relished the march of a good ha mile with an inebriate man. Accordingly, two of the bulldogs, a vancing, seized Mr. Penlake's arms, and offered their assistance.

But Mr. Penlake was not going to be removed quietly. H struggled and lurched and tumbled into the gutter, until he h fairly got the Proctor into a towering passion.

'Carry him!' he shouted indignantly. And thus it came to pa that a procession was formed, and the word to march having be given, they bore the recumbent Mr. Penlake to Worcester and d posited him comfortably at the college gate. But the porter, being summoned, disavowed all knowledge of Mr. Penlake. N was there, as it appeared, any undergraduate of the name of Benn or Pennel on the college books.

'What is your college?' shouted the Proctor.

'Maudlin,' grunted Mr. Penlake stupidly.

'Then why did you say Worcester?'

'I—I didn't shay Woosher; I shed M-Maudlin.'

There was nothing for it but to resume their march. To t reader unacquainted with the geography of Oxford, we may sta that Worcester College is distant from Magdalen (or Maudlin) Co lege about a mile and a quarter.

'Dear, dear,' yawned the unlucky Proctor, 'I'm tired to death it is, and, besides, it's getting late. This is very, very unpleasant

Tramp, tramp down Beaumont-street, Broad-street, Holywell, Long Wall. At length they arrived at Magdalen College, the bulldogs almost ready to drop from carrying some thirteen stone of inert humanity.

On summoning the janitor of Waynflete's Foundation, Mr. Bennel, or Pennel, was indignantly repudiated. What was to be done? The man seemed too idiotically intoxicated to be guilty of a practical joke. However, the Proctor began to entertain suspicions.

'If you don't tell me, sir, at once your true name and college, I'll—I'll expel you, sir, from this University, sir!'

These terrible words he shouted in Mr. Penlake's ear.

'Whash use of making susch row? I shed Sin Johnsh. Take me to Sin Johnsh.'

'You prevaricate, sir,' replied the Proctor. 'You have dragged us to two other colleges; and let me tell you, you have done so at your peril.'

Mr. Penlake was acting with some *nous*. He meant to give his enemy a good walk in order to have the laugh of him. For this reason he mentioned the names of colleges as far apart as he could, thereby entailing upon the weary official and his officers the maximum of hard work.

In high dudgeon the whole party retraced their steps towards St. Giles's, and after several stoppages, caused by the fatigue of the bulldogs, they eventually reached St. John's College, where, as before, the porter denied Mr. Penlake admittance. Here, however, the bulldogs began to protest their inability to act as beasts of burden beyond a reasonable limit. So a council of war was held. The Marshal opined that Mr. Penlake, who was reposing cosily on the pavement, was a member of Christ Church. One bulldog could swear that he belonged to Merton; another that he had seen him in a surplice in New College Chapel. The Marshal's opinion, being entitled to most weight, prevailed; and therefore once more the burden was lifted, and borne, amid the muttered execrations of the bulldogs, to Canterbury-gate. There the porter, having strict instructions from brave old Dr. Gaisford, the then Dean of Christ Church, to hold no parley with Proctors, slammed the door in their faces. Indignant beyond measure at this rebuff, the Proctor gave orders to convey Mr. Penlake to the lock-up, in spite of a remonstrance from the Marshal that he would in that case be associated with parties of the opposite sex, who, for real or supposed naughtiness, were confined in the University prison-cell—an eventuality which, to the mind of the Marshal, appeared more than terrible. The Proctor, however, wanted to get to bed, and, inasmuch as something must be done with this man of no college, he preferred to put him under lock and key. Accordingly, the bulldogs prepared to lift Mr. Penlake once again. That gentleman, however, had no idea of anything so

serious as imprisonment. He felt, therefore, that he must escape from his present situation by hook or by crook. His first move was to regain his legs.

'I'm better now,' he muttered. 'I'll try and walk.'

'Why didn't you tell us your college?' whispered the Marshal confidentially.

'I've told you once,' he said, more rationally; 'it's Wadham.'

Finding that the prisoner could walk, the bulldogs very readily allowed him the use of his legs, retaining him by his arms only. In this fashion the procession reached the quadrangle formed by the Bodleian, All Souls, Brasenose, and St. Mary's Church, in the centre of which stands the Radcliffe Library. As they passed the church, Mr. Penlake dexterously thrust one leg under the bulldog who held his right arm, thereby tripping him up. Then, by a quick movement, as one man fell, he wrenched himself from the grasp of the other, and thus in a trice stood at liberty. Before the Marshal, who realised the hoax, could seize his gown, he had bounded away from them down Brasenose-lane at a tearing pace; turning sharp round by Exeter, he made for the Broad-street, where, distancing his pursuers, he divested himself of his beard and moustache, flung away his scholar's gown, twisted round his tie, and then deliberately turned back and encountered the Proctor in the Turl.

'Your name and college, sir?'

'Penlake of Brazenface.'

'Where is your gown, sir.'

'I've left it in Trinity.'

'Did you meet any one running in the Broad-street?'

'Yes, sir; a man with a beard; about my height.'

'Thank you, sir. Don't let me meet you without your gown again at this time of night.'

Mr. Penlake bowed, and triumphantly marched off to his college, where, at a supper of superlative festivity, he told the story to an admiring circle.

Luckily for Mr. Penlake, the Junior Proctor went out of office during the next vacation. Of course, by degrees it oozed out that Mr. Pennel, of so many colleges, was really Mr. Penlake. However, he never suffered, directly or indirectly, from the results of this adventure. Indeed, it was whispered that the good old Head of Brazenface was so delighted at a joke being played upon one from whom he differed ecclesiastically and politically, that it was solely on account of this escapade that he awarded to Mr. Penlake a certain valuable exhibition. We must, however, accept that as mere scandal. Our hero, having once passed the dreaded smalls, took more kindly to reading, and eventually achieved his B.A. sleeves, to the credit of himself and his college. Hence, perhaps, he merited the patronage of his worthy chief.

COMPTON READE, M.A.

OBSERVATIONS ON ENGLISH DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE

Architecture has suffered more than any other branch of the fine arts from professional exclusiveness and indifference. It has been too much a habit to think that no rules are of force but those which conform to classical, mediæval, or Italian standards—those, in fact, which have been sanctioned by the long-established practice of the profession. Much as we admire the great works of the past, and delight in the matchless forms of beauty which they present to the eye, we are conscious, at the same time, that they would not suit the wants of modern society; and every attempt merely to revive the form of them, except for ecclesiastical purposes, reminds us of the parable of putting new wine into old bottles. Mankind is greater than houses, and the wants of society ought to be more important, in deciding the character of a building intended for social purposes, than the ancient styles. Surely, if modern life can produce its own poetry, and decide the character of its own ideal in matters of thought, it ought to be qualified to determine the character of its architecture. It was so in the Tudor era; and the only development of the art which has fairly represented the nation was the domestic and civil architecture produced at that period. Since then we have tamely submitted to the arbitrary dictation of the 'styles.' But the time has at length come for subjecting all these things to the crucial tests of criticism, and for reasserting the strong natural claims of common sense to be heard in the debate.

We have early indications of a movement of the public mind in this direction in the *Principles* — that remarkable work of the great English architect of this century, the late Augustus Welby Pugin. No man that ever lived was more committed to a 'style,' or more devoted to mediæval art; and yet this was the man who, in the zenith of his fame and maturity of his judgment, declared that his opinions had undergone a change, and that no buildings were so suitable for the English as those which were formed, or had been formed, out of the wants of the English people. It wanted all the power of a new inspiration to convince the great English mediævalist that he had to consider something beyond and before the claims of his art; but he was of the true metal; his genius was loyal to the highest influences at work in the age. Men of lower calibre never get beyond routine. They are never able to throw off the incubus of habit—never able to see beyond the times in which

they live. It was the force of an irresistible instinct, discerning afar off the coming change, which could so impress upon that master mind the deference due to modern thought. In one of his works Mr. Pugin observes: 'Will the architecture of our times, even supposing it solid enough to last, hand down to posterity any certain clue or guide to the system under which it was erected? Surely not; it is not the expression of existing opinions and circumstances but a confused jumble of styles and symbols borrowed from all nations and periods. . . . Whilst we profess the creed of Christians whilst we glory in being Englishmen, let us have an architecture the arrangements and details of which will alike remind us of our faith and country—an architecture whose beauties we may claim as our own, whose symbols have originated in our religion and our customs. Such an architecture is to be found in the works of our great ancestors, whose noble conceptions and mighty works were originated and perfected under a faith and system for the most part common with our own' (*Apology*, p. 6).

We agree with Mr. Pugin that after the Gothic, which is not a local style at all, Tudor architecture, which is purely English, is the most original and characteristic we possess. It is our vernacular rendering of the Gothic, and, beyond all question, the only style of building which has proved itself capable of perfect adaptation to our ideas and our climate. We adopt it, therefore, as being the only style which affords any model on which genuine English architecture can be developed. And our observations in this article will go no farther than to represent its character and results.

But there is another feature of the times having an important bearing on this question, and that is the recent application of ceramic art on the surface enrichment of brick buildings, and in interiors of stone buildings, which is only just coming into general use. It is evident, from many fine buildings erected within the last few years, that we are gradually feeling our way, and coming to the conclusion that the success of English architecture very much depends upon the varied uses and appliances of this beautiful commodity. Our English nature is too original to be content with a revival of Tudor architecture unaccompanied by improvements of this kind. We must adapt it to our wants, and the repeated efforts to do so will in time establish a style national in its character and suited to the present age. We shall then have buildings which, in picturesque appearance, will rival those of the most famous continental cities.

What improvements of the Tudor model are needed to produce this result have to some extent been suggested in the foregoing remarks; but there is one important fact which ought to have due consideration, and that is, our success as colourists, in which we are superior to other nations (since the Manchester Art-Treasures

Exhibition of 1857 placed it beyond doubt). The gallery of English paintings at Manchester astonished the world, and placed us in the foremost rank as masters of the art of colouring. On that occasion our national predilection for rich colours, and the tendency of our taste in that direction, was fully displayed. Our painters could not, it is true, rival the great continental masters in originality of ideas, but they went beyond them in richness of treatment, and succeeded in establishing a preëminence which is now universally acknowledged. Nothing resembling it has been achieved in any department of art in this country since the Tudor period, and then only in the sister art of architecture. Now in the application of these results—in the adaptation of rich colours to exteriors and interiors of buildings, and in a corresponding adaptation of the Tudor model to modern requirements—we have a general conception of English domestic architecture as it should be, from which, as a starting-point, we may proceed to survey its characteristics in detail.

We will begin with the dwelling-houses of our artisans—the plain quadrilateral blocks of our towns and villages—which originated in the untutored instinct of the people over whom professional ideas could have exercised but slight influence, and are the staple ut of which the civil architecture of England is composed. What re they, in reality, but reproductions of the Tudor cottage adapted o modern use, and without the ornaments belonging to the Tudor eriod? It is true, as a class, that buildings of this kind are run p without reference to artistic demands; but they show in what irection the popular taste lies, and that all the splendour of mereicious art has been insufficient to withdraw the English people rom their favourite style, and their love of simple substantial arangements. Mr. Pugin only spoke the national sentiment when e said: 'Better is it to do a little substantially, and consistntly with truth, than to produce a great and false show. Cheap eceptions of magnificence encourage persons to assume a semlance of decoration far beyond either their means or their station' *Principles*, p. 27). It would be a mistake, however, to suppose hat houses of this class do not admit of artistic treatment. The ooms, on whatever scale, admit of being well proportioned; and hough it may not be possible to introduce a great variety of detail, is always desirable that the walls should be substantial, and the nternal arrangements as convenient and symmetrical as possible. t is likewise an infringement on the ordinary proportions of the udor model to carry up buildings higher than two stories; but ttics may be formed in the roof with advantage and effect, when he exigences of trade and the value of property allow any choice the matter.

The next class of houses we have to consider are the villas and ansions of the middle and upper ranks of society; and we confine

our remarks, of course, to those built after the English manner. The modern English mansion is, we think, the most characteristic, commodious, and homely, as well as the most picturesque, house to be found in this or any other country. With us nothing is finished. We are always improving and developing. Our philosophy is experimental, and our character is the same. We build, and pull down, and alter till we get what we want; and must have architecture that is expansive, like our habits; that may be increased at pleasure, or altered and accommodated to existing circumstances; and just such a flexible system as this we possess in our Tudor style. The old manor-house, in its simplest proportions, is nothing but an enlargement of the Tudor cottage; and the modern English mansion, in its primitive state, is a quadrilateral arrangement of the same character. When the old house became too small for the occupiers, they had only to add wings to it, and this at once, as we may see, led to the introduction of gables and their oriels. Towers and turrets were next required at the terminations of the wings as the house developed in size, and suited admirably the purposes for which they were required, as well as the style of the building. The large dining-halls, picture-galleries, and libraries had their internal height increased by means of open roofs, which have a magnificent effect, and afford ample opportunity for the display of ornamental detail. The windows were sometimes pointed and filled with tracery, but our national predilection for horizontal rather than vertical effect was displayed in the very low pitch which was generally adopted.

The same law of necessity determining the structure of a building also regulates the proper distribution of its ornamental details, which ought never to be, in any case, such as do not express English ideas of beauty. Small houses, of course, present few external features suitable for decoration; when, however, more detail is desired, the features of the construction which are ugly of themselves indicate where the ornament should be placed. The form of construction necessarily suggests endless variety of detail. Weatherings, string-courses, base-courses, and buttresses are all available, and may be made much of as ornamental features. There is scarcely any external object that is ugly in itself which may not be made ornamental by judicious treatment. Lanterns surmounted with a spire are fine features on open roofs, and serve the double purpose of ventilation and of a central elevation, to which all the roof-lines may be made to converge. For external as well as internal effect these details are most important.

But the recent application of ceramic ornament, either by itself or in combination with sculptured details, is a most important addition to the resources of the architect, and is, in fact, all that English architecture wanted to render it perfectly attractive to the eye. In the best designs we have seen the ceramic ornament is introduced

immediately under the cornice of the roof, and under the stone mouldings which mark on the surface of the walls the proportions of the building. It may likewise be introduced with good effect on the architraves of doors and windows, and on blocks, entablatures, and plinths; but in all cases it should be placed *under* the projecting mouldings, or *on* the flat members of the same. We have observed also in the best designs an admirable gradation of treatment; the largest patterns and gayest colours being established nearest the roof. A bold bordering of interlaced scroll-work, with the colours positive and bright, has a fine effect underneath the cornice. A more subdued effect is sought when the ornament has to be placed under the string-courses, midway of the building. Near the point of sight quiet colours are most generally adopted; and the treatment of blocks and entablatures, where there is a considerable flat surface, would be after the manner of a diaper; but in elaborate designs they may be enriched to any extent by the introduction of heraldic fields or medallion portraits, in every variety of device. Lines of coloured bricks are only suitable to relieve the ornament or connect it with the surface of the walls, and when used as a cheap substitute for the Staffordshire tiles, the effect is too flat and tame. When expense is no object, the temptation is rather to do too much than too little; and both professional and amateur architects should bear in mind that English taste always inclines towards simplicity of detail, and that whenever the ornament traverses the building in such a way as to interfere with the correctness of its proportions, it is overdone.

If coloured decoration is so conspicuous on elevations, it is much more so on walls and ceilings of interiors, where the eye is more frequently affected by it. Colour is the divine solace of the mind. We walk into the fields in spring and autumn to refresh ourselves with the face of nature. Ten thousand tints are there blended before our eyes with an effect like the chords of a very fine symphony. It is the mysterious beauty of colour seen in the tempered light of beneath the blue sky that produces the charm we feel in the summer time. The same charm, to a certain extent, we may have reproduced in our homes all the year round. Art can transfer to our habitations the varied colours of nature, and no branch of it has made more astonishing progress of late than that of surface decoration. The collection of designs recently exhibited for national competition at South Kensington Museum—including contributions from architectural designers, house-painters, lady students, and others—showed at what a state of perfection this beautiful art has already arrived; and what a mass of amateur and professional skill is available and ready for employment. The same love of rich colour is traceable in the finest examples of classical and mediæval art, and in the best of the Egyptian, Etruscan, Pompeian, Arabian, and

AT THE FIFTH ACT

Prologue.

A play, whereof the scenes are bitter-sweet,
Is acted in young days of ardent truth
By modest maidens fair from face to feet,
And by their worshippers, aspiring youth.
The first act is as welcome as the sight
Of a new moon looking through a wood in spring;
The second act and third are full of light,
And summer warmth and scent of blossoming;
The fourth act is the eve of harvest-day,
When love, large-hearted, beats to melody;
And then the doubtful fifth act ends the play,
And makes it comedy or tragedy.

Act I.

Our life is as a wood of fairy fame,
Where you may enter and behold the spring,
And farther on see summer bloom aflame,
And hear the birds that through the long days sing.
Anon you come to where the late lights blend,
And find the colour'd autumn trees aglow.
Such is the fairy wood; and at the end
Are brumal boughs and banks all white with snow.
Lucinda Wetherland, with eyes of truth,
Began the strange walk through the changing wood,
And at the entrance met a merry youth,
With sweet surprise of early womanhood.

Act II.

On Edward Thorpe love like a kind dream fell;
A moment in a sudden maze he stood,
While passion's piping prelude woo'd him well,
And with fine glamourie becharm'd the wood;
He lost the fair sight, but the precious strain
Of silent music slid into his heart,
To be remember'd aye, and to remain
His winter sunshine or his summer smart.
But there were many pathways, and again
They met, and were not mute; nor did he miss
The sweetest sweet that he might wish to gain—
Love quite at love with love, and kiss with kiss.

rmole, del. C. M. Jenkin, sc.

THROUGH THE CHANGING WOOD.

ACT III.

Lucinda met another youth, with eyes
Of graver greeting, and of softer speech;
And he had subtle songs of mysteries,
And wisdom truths romantic he could teach.
His name was Gilbert Gray, and never wight
Was bound in love with stronger sweeter band.
He saw her eyes, and, dreaming in the light,
He knew he loved Lucinda Wetherland.
Nor had she for his love antipathy,
But a new passion that had quickly grown;
So that she gave him her full sympathy,
And his red bud of promise was broad blown.

ACT IV.

But Edward came again, and simple love
Grew dearer than the days of deeper truth;
And Gilbert, who had sat with stars above,
Was quite forsaken for another youth.
To-morrow morning, and the bridal band
Will be glad-hearted for the marriage-day
Of Edward and Lucinda Wetherland,
And all will think of happiness who may;
Love that is deep may turn a darker way,
And Gilbert he is sunk in malady.
So ends the fourth act; morrow ends the play—
Will it be comedy or tragedy?

GUY ROSLYN.

WHY THAT OLD GENTLEMAN PAID

A Sequel to 'At the Bar'

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

MESSRS. GINGER AND POP, those estimable Refreshment Contractors, write to me (very civilly, I will admit, and with a case containing two dozen pints of Messrs. Wachter and Co.'s extra dry champagne —which I have sent to the Hyperborean Dispensary for Diseases of the Œsophagus—accompanying their polite note) to say that they have no kind of *buffet* at the Charing-cross station of the Underground Railway; and that consequently a young gentleman named Saxon, late of H.M. Hundred and Fiftieth Foot, could never have got into trouble at their non-existent refreshment-room for non-payment of a Soda-and-B. I beg Messrs. Ginger and Pop's pardon with all my heart. At the same time I may be permitted to observe that there are a great many modes open to me for explaining away the seeming blunder. That which might, perhaps, cause the least trouble would be the memorable reply of the consistent witness, who swore in a certain horse-stealing case that the animal forming the *gravamen* of the charge was sixteen hands high, and who was sharply reminded by the cross-examining counsel that, in his original deposition before the magistrate, he had taken his oath that the steed was sixteen *feet* in altitude. 'Did I swear it?' asked the consistent witness. 'Well, if I did, *I'll stick to it.*' You might find it as difficult if you pushed me hard, and put me on my full dialectical mettle, to prove that there is no refreshment-room at the Charing-cross, or rather Embankment, station aforesaid, as to show that the earth is globular in form, or that such a person as Joan of Arc ever existed. Between ourselves I entertain grave doubts as to the historic truth of the Maid's tragedy, and am much more of opinion that she was an invention of Mr. Tom Taylor for the benefit of the Beautiful Mrs. Rousby. But I disdain to chop logic, or split casuistical straws in this regard. I plead the privilege of the penny-a-lining peerage, which is to be inaccurate whenever no special purpose is to be gained by being accurate. Besides, *my* Underground Railway may be in Imaginary London. Am I not the author of a Delusive Directory to the British Metropolis?

When, however, I come to add that I have received several reams of penny-post letters, and about half a hundredweight of post-cards, all asking me in terms, now of anger and now of affection, now of

bewilderment and now of derision, why that little old gentleman in the drab hat and the long green overcoat, and with the curly wig and the gold-rimmed spectacles, should have paid for Charley Saxon's refreshment at the Charing-cross *buffet*, and thus have rescued him from the dire dilemma in which he was placed, the matter becomes much more serious. There is a mystery, and I must explain it. The strangely impulsive generosity—as it seemed—of that old gentleman demands elucidation in a sequel to 'At the Bar.'

Of course, Charley was profuse in his expressions of gratitude towards the little old gentleman, who received these protestations with a mere 'tut, tut!' adding that it was one of the most natural things in the world for a young gentleman such as he (our hero) evidently was to have his pocket picked. 'And I daresay,' he continued, his head on one side and with a very arch, not to say cunning, expression twinkling through his gold-rimmed spectacles, 'that it isn't the first time in your life that you've been cleaned out, my young friend.'

He looked, under these circumstances, so remarkably like an owl in an ivy bush—I grant the dissimilarity of costume, but it is the expression that does it—that Charley fancied for a moment that he must be not on the Thames Embankment, but in the keep of Arundel Castle, and an object of the contemplation of that very wise old owl (he regularly eats two tom-cats a day) who goes by the name of 'Lord Eldon.' It would have been rude, however, to tell the little old gentleman so; and as to the number of times he had been 'cleaned out' in the course of his brief but eventful career, *that* was somewhat too sore a point with Charley to dilate upon just then. So he contented himself with asking his benefactor where and when he could call upon him for the purpose of repaying the trifling but inestimably opportune loan, the advance of which had rescued him from so dire a predicament. 'I shall have to pop something else before I can pay him,' the ex-subaltern thought, ruefully enough, as he asked the question. 'My uncle will get tired of taking in trousers next, I suppose; and then I shall have to spout my boots, and after that I shall have to hang myself in my braces.'

There was, seemingly, no mysterious reticence about the little old gentleman, and he was prompt in his reply. 'I live in Good-Gracious-street, just over the water,' he said cheerily; 'and we'll go there this very minute. Hi, hansom!' and with a green-silk umbrella of bulgy outline he hailed one of the 'gondoliers of London,' who was crawling with his vehicle along the Embankment in the direction of Westminster Bridge.

'But I haven't breakfasted,' quoth Charley, somewhat embarrassed.

'That's just it. Haven't breakfasted myself. Never can get up an appetite till I've taken a trot over from the Surrey side to see

'Tut, tut!' interposed the Samaritan in the curly b
'Don't know me, eh? Never been introduced, and th
thing? Fiddle-de-dee! I know you quite well, Captain
you ought to have bought your captaincy by this time—1
Hundred and Fiftieth. Bets, bills, Jews, Bildad and Shu
tleman in difficulties—I've been in difficulties myself; I
in 'em—fine handsome young fellow. World all before
to choose. Just a little hard up for the moment, eh? I
out; keep it dark; make it all right. Know all about
pray, my dear sir, not another word. Jump in. Cabby,
cious-street. Look sharp, and I'll pay you. Dear, dea
doesn't look sharp, we shall be late for breakfast!' And
fragmentary discourse the little old gentleman had jostled
dered ex-subaltern into the cab; had poked his umbrella t
trap thereof to incite the 'gondolier' to speed, and had pull
consulted at least a dozen times a massive gold watch-
brother, presumably, of the one worth forty guineas of wh
been robbed in Villiers-street; and with the gleaming g
his gold-rimmed spectacles had fascinated Charley Saxo
the Ancient Mariner fascinated the Wedding Guest; and
speak, before you could say Jack Robinson.

'Name, eh? ah, quite forgot!' his companion su
served, as the cab, having crossed the bridge, went rattli
wilds of Kennington. '*That's* my name, Captain Saxon.
be offended. Ought to have been a captain long ago.'

With which compliment he handed Charley a small o
bearing this inscription:

'Mr. T. Bantam Cox

'I know what you're thinking of,' Mr. Bantam Cox remarked, a whole shower of twinklings coruscating from the gold-rimmed spectacles. 'You're thinking that your Tommy's an odd fish. So he is. He glories in it. And look you here, young man,' he continued, with somewhat of solemnity in his manner, 'if you want to know more about me, I'll tell you. Your Tommy lives on his means, and he's a man that likes to look on the Sunny Side of things.'

The description left something, perhaps, to be desired, on the score of definiteness; but Charley was by this time quite prepared to pursue the adventure to its *dénouement;* and had Mr. T. Bantam Cox informed him that he was the Gentleman Gaoler of the Tower of London, or the husband of the Pig-faced Lady, or the Man in the Moon, he would have received the announcement in the same philosophical spirit.

A quarter of an hour's rattling over the stones brought them to Good-Gracious-street, which was a truly suburban locality—a kind of compromise between a street, a road, a grove, a crescent, a lane, and a double row of detached villas—embowered in trees, and with pretty lawns and flower-gardens in front. With all this, there was a public-house at the corner of Good-Gracious-street, and a public-house at the bottom. Pisgah Chapel (Primitive Mumpers' connection) was in the middle of the street, flanked on one side by a mansion in the most florid style of suburban gothic architecture, and on the other by a charming little two-storied villa, the façade half smothered—it was summer time—with roses and eglantine. There was a delicious little garden in front, and on the iron rails of the gate was a very large and highly-polished brass plate, on which were graven the words, 'HAPPY VILLA.'

'That's where I live,' cried Mr. Bantam Cox merrily. 'Jump out, my dear sir. Now, cabby, here's your fare. It's no use arguing. You know me well enough. Be off, will you, in a brace of shakes.' And Mr. T. Bantam Cox pushed back the iron gate, and inducted Charley Saxon into the precincts of Happy Villa.

That which the hansom cabman subsequently said was unheard by his quondam fare; but it is the privilege of the romancer to be in the receipt of fern-seed, to walk invisible, and to listen to a variety of remarks, the utterers of which have not the slightest suspicion of being overheard. Thus did it come to pass with the 'gondolier' who had brought the little old gentleman and his newly-found acquaintance from the Thames Embankment to Happy Villa.

'Yes,' he growled, holding with scornfully bent arm, and in the palm of a remarkably grubby buckskin glove, the legal fare for the journey, which was one shilling and sixpence; '*I* know yer well enuff for the humbuggingest old skinflint, as 'ud ride half round the Postal Ragious for heighteenpence. *I* know yer, yer hold himage. I wonder what's your game, now, with that swell out of luck, as looks

as 'ungry as hif he'd been tied up for ten days in a cookshop with a muzzle on. No good, I'll go bail. A bad lot—a bad lot!' With which disparaging dismissal of his customer, the gondolier viciously flicked his horse over the left ear with his long whip, and sulkily departed. He met a nervous widow in a hurry (she was going to see her trustees), and charged her half-a-crown for conveying her from opposite the Blind School to the eastern extremity of Great George-street, Westminster; a transaction which somewhat poured oil on the troubled waters of that cabman's soul. *La vie n'est pas sans de grandes consolations.*

Meanwhile the little old gentleman had ushered Charley—the door of the villa being opened by a rosy-cheeked servant of smirking mien—into a dainty front parlour, very prettily furnished, and the walls of which were hung with engraved portraits of the most distinguished equity and common-law judges of past and present times. Charley was somewhat staggered by this imposing array of ancient and sapient countenances, enshrined in full-bottomed wigs, and terminating in bands and robes.

'Ah, you wonder at my taste, I daresay,' chuckled the little old gentleman, marking the attention with which his guest surveyed the portraits. 'I'm very fond of Law. It's such a Noble Study.' The little old gentleman appeared to have carried his fondness for the law to the extent of keeping a record of the sittings of the various legal tribunals of the land; for stuck on the looking-glass were divers printed notices relating to causes in the Queen's Bench, the Common Pleas, the Exchequer, and the Courts of Bankruptcy in Basinghall-street and Lincoln's-inn. 'Never mind those odds and ends,' he remarked, as he saw Charley's gaze directed towards these *graffiti* on blue foolscap. 'Look at the pictures. Ain't they beautiful? That's Lord Eldon. Great man, Lord Eldon. Your Tommy's considered like him. There's Mansfield, Ellenborough, Lyndhurst, Brougham; and there's Sir Fitzroy Kelly, Knight, at Westminster.'

'This is certainly the oddest old file I ever came across,' mused Charley, pursuing his investigation of the ornaments of the apartment; 'and, mercy on us, what can my Tommy want with all these clocks?' There were, indeed, a couple of rather handsome French clocks on the mantelpiece; and a skeleton timepiece was making a painful exhibition of its internal arrangements on the chiffonier. One bracket supported an alabaster clock, surmounted by a figure of Hope leaning on an anchor; on another shelf was a Tyrolese horologe with an elaborately carved case; and in a corner was a huge old eight-day clock, rumbling and wheezing like a patient in the acute stage of chronic bronchitis.

'Clocks—yes, I've plenty of clocks,' Mr. Cox—he should have been Mr. Clocks—explained, as he saw Charley's eye travelling from one timepiece to the other. 'This is how it is. Your Tommy, you

see, owns a goodish deal of house property hereabouts, and his tenants are so fond of him, that they often send him their clocks to take care of, especially when they're a little bit behindhand with their rent. You've no idea how fond of your Tommy his tenants are. It's quite affecting.'

'I'll give it up,' said Charley Saxon to himself. 'My Tommy *must* be mad. Everybody is mad, so they say, over the water.'

At this juncture breakfast was brought in; and the ex-subaltern, who was by this time hungry enough for several hunters, had something else besides portraits and clocks to think about. It was a capital breakfast. Ham and eggs, devilled kidneys, Strasburg pie, anchovy-toast, and other delicacies graced the festive board; and, in addition to the usual tea and coffee, a fascinating diluent to the solids appeared in a huge silver tankard full of Bass's bitter. Charley thought of his old feasts in the mess-room, and of the trifling balance in which he stood indebted to the messman of the Hundred and Fiftieth Foot. On the first he dwelt with fond regret. The last did not trouble him much. Messmen make large profits, no doubt, from their catering, and they must be prepared to put up with the risk of the balances.

'Your Tommy always takes Bass at breakfast,' Mr. Saxon's host observed, as the victim of the Purchase System indulged in a hearty draught from the tankard; 'in fact, he doesn't object sometimes to a glass of bitter before breakfast; and I was on my way to have one when I found you in Queer-street yonder. But you were drinking something stronger. Aha! you were having Soda-and-B. Take my advice, young sir, and avoid aerated waters qualified with spirits in the morning. *There's no hope for a brandy-and-soda man.*'

He uttered these words in a tone of deep earnestness, approaching solemnity, and that is why I have put them in italics. On Charley asking him why the case of a person imbibing the stimulant he had denounced must be considered hopeless, the little old gentleman went on,

'*Because brandy-and-soda-water men Die.* Your Tommy wants his friends—bless 'em all!—to Live. If you only knew the agonies of mind I've suffered through the prevalence of "pegging" with Soda-and-B. in the Bengal Squadron and the Eighteenth Rifles, pity your Tommy, you would indeed.'

'Well,' answered Charley good-humouredly, 'I'll promise to live, and not "peg" any more before noon, if that will suit you.'

'It will indeed, Charles Saxon,' the little old gentleman replied, as he produced a box of exquisitely odorous havanas. 'I suppose you smoke. All you army gentlemen do; and I rather encourage it, as I am led, from observation, to the conviction that smoking rather discourages "pegging" than otherwise. Now, light up your cigar,

and listen to me; and, if I'm rude, you mustn't be angry with your Tommy. Nobody's angry with their Tommy; he's such a Duck."

A duck in a curly brown wig and gold-rimmed spectacles—a duck with false teeth, and deeply pitted with the smallpox—is somewhat, it must be admitted, of a *rara avis;* but 'my Tommy' was evidently a character, and Charley promised that he would not be angry with him, whatever he might say.

What did he say? That, for the present, must remain a mystery; but all will be duly explained in the sequel.

Charley Saxon turned very steady shortly after the period of his first interview with Mr. Bantam Cox in Good-Gracious-street. He wrote a series of the most beautifully penitent letters home to his papa, the Rector of Rawley-cum-Crew, stating that he had at last awakened to the errors of his past life, and that he was inflexibly determined for the future to lead a new one. Furthermore he conveyed to his parents the gratifying intelligence that he had obtained 'something to do in the City,' and that the something was of a nature to secure him, if sedulously pursued, a reasonable competence; nay, that eventually perhaps it might lead to the acquisition on his part of a handsome fortune. What the 'something' in the City was, and whether he had gone on the Stock Exchange, or had become a shipbroker, or had received the appointment of Chamberlain to the Corporation of London, the repentant prodigal omitted to state; but that his civic avocations were of a remunerative kind became speedily and gratifyingly apparent to his affectionate relatives at Rawley-cum-Crew, by his sending his mother, as a birthday present, a fifty-pound note of the crispest texture and the newest impression. Soon afterwards he made his papa even a larger remittance, in a letter in which he told his parent that it was a shame that his clerical duties should be longer interfered with, and his well-deserved leisure sacrificed by having to attend to the education of his brother Jack; and that, as things in the City were now going very well with him, he was delighted to enclose the wherewithal for the dispatch of Jack to Cheam School, and his maintenance at that celebrated place of education, for two years. To the four tall young women, his sisters, he was in degree equally munificent. At least, they were no longer forced to wear turned gowns, to don coloured hose in default of being able to afford white stockings, or to mend their gloves until scarcely any of the original fabric remained. Everybody rejoiced over this thorough reformation of the black sheep. Who does not, indeed, to see the black sheep washed white, especially when it is not we who have had to pay for the carbolic-acid soap and the scrubbing-brushes?

In London, Charley Saxon eschewed the carnal and irreverent regions of the West-end, and dwelt in the peaceful shades of Clapham, occupying indeed a tranquil first floor furnished, not a hundred

es from the blissful thoroughfare known as Philomel-lane, and ere the landlady—her husband was an elder of Pisgah Chapel—ginal Mumpers'-connection in Good-Gracious-street—declared him be for morality, decorum, sweetness of temper, and earliness of irs, a model to all single gentlemen present and to come. In payments he was as punctual as the Bank of England; an ablishment which has, I believe, earned some renown for its prompude and accuracy in monetary matters: and he drank milk-and-ter and ate hard-boiled eggs for breakfast on Sunday, in order to oid wounding the theological scruples of the worthy folks with iom he dwelt. Ah! he was indeed a pattern—this erst careless d profligate subaltern, late of the Hundred and Fiftieth Foot. He ill kept up his subscription at his club, but rarely entered that unt of dissipation and emporium of idle and frivolous conversation. ie billiard-rooms and the Burlington-arcade, the Alhambra and e Argyll, the Grand Stand at Epsom and the stalls of the Royal iormity Theatre, knew him no more. Ah! he had become a anged, a very changed young man. The fellows in Pall Mall ighed, and said that Charley Saxon had turned Methodist parson. hen, by chance, the convert met any of the fellows in the street, would cast his eyes down, and cross over to the other side.

You will remember that Pisgah Chapel was on the side opposite that which was the site of Happy Villa, flanked by a handsome insion in the suburban style of florid gothic architecture. This iidence was styled Chalcedon Lodge, and at Chalcedon Lodge ed the two Miss Murryams, ancient ladies of independent means, th whom resided their orphan niece, Miss Ruth Clodestowe, a xom young person with brown hair and pretty gray eyes, and who s now verging upon two-and-twenty years of age. She had been ward in Chancery, and the Lord Chancellor for the time being ght well be proud of being guardian to such a ward, seeing that was as good as she was pretty, and was now absolute mistress a hundred and fifty thousand pounds. This comfortable *peculium* l been bequeathed to his only daughter by her papa deceased, o was—well, something in the City. I should be wantonly and kedly deceiving you if I were to assert that, in addition to being d, pretty, and wealthy, Miss Ruth Clodestowe was clever. Quite contrary. She was a fool: a fact which did not in the slightest ree militate against her having the heart that could feel for ther—against her being an excellent housekeeper, and altoge-r a very companionable little body. My calm conviction has long n that, in the vast majority of happy marriages, the wife has been ol. From my point of view, I mean: there are fools and fools. l, it would never do for the husband to be a fool as well as his use.

Mr. T. Bantam Cox was on very friendly terms with the ladies

of Chalcedon Lodge. Indeed, he was the landlord of the Miss Mur ryams, and had built Chalcedon Lodge at his own cost and charge years before, and, unless I am very much mistaken, the freehold Pisgah Chapel was also his property. His relations with his ten ants being of a friendly as well as of a business nature, what coul be more natural than that this Tommy should have the honour to in troduce to them his particular and estimable friend, Mr. Charl Saxon? 'Once in the army—Captain Saxon—connected with th very first families and that sort of thing,' Mr. Bantam Cox whispere to the ancient maiden ladies, while Charley was talking gente platitudes to Miss Ruth Clodestowe about Pisgah Chapel, Exet Hall, and the last meeting of the branch Society for establishin Missions among the Fantail Indians. The old ladies did not min the fact of Mr. Saxon's having been in the army; since to th information Mr. Bantam Cox added the hint that he was no engaged in the City, and doing remarkably well. They looked upo him, now that he had done with a mundane and sinful career, as brand snatched from the burning, and rejoiced exceedingly. A for Ruth, she rather liked the notion of the young gentleman, whos moustaches had been so cleanly shaved off, having been once captain. She liked his eyes, his teeth, the colour of his hair, h mild and caressing—albeit strictly respectful—conversation. Sl liked his very hands and filbert-shaped finger-nails, the way he h of pinning his scarf, and toying with his watch-chain. She lik him, and everything that was his; and being a fool, she fell ov head and ears, there and then, in love with Charley Saxon.

They were married, not at Pisgah Chapel, but, as was sufficient customary with the denizens of Good-Gracious-street, at old S Jumpus's parish church, Newington. There were no less th eighteen clarences, two glass-coaches, and a miniature brougham the marriage procession; and several young ladies fainted away the gallery previous to the final tying of the nuptial knot. The gran est of wedding breakfasts took place at Chalcedon Lodge, but prior the commencement of the banquet Mr. T. Bantam Cox took Charl Saxon aside into the back drawing-room, and thus bespoke him:

'Young sir, I think your Tommy has now done the right thi in this matter. He's made you the husband of a pretty girl—ne mind her being a fool—with a hundred and fifty thousand poun for her fortune, every shilling of which is settled on herself; b which, invested in the elegant simplicity of the Three per cents, w yield interest to the amount of some four thousand five hundred year: quite enough, I should say, to enable you to keep house, a to have a pretty large balance over for pocket-money. No young sir, do you know what you've got to do?'

'Why,' replied Charley with a loud laugh, 'I've got to retu you the shilling you paid for the Soda-and-B. at the refreshmen

room at Charing-cross, and which, 'pon my word, has never entered my head from that morning to this.'

'You owe me a great deal more than that,' retorted the little old gentleman sternly. 'Vain and inconsequential youth, *do you know who I am?*'

'Why, my Tommy, and a very capital fellow,' the bridegroom replied with another laugh, and slapping his benefactor heartily on the back.

'Don't do that,' the little old gentleman rejoined. 'I'm asthmatical, and I don't like it. Of course I'm your Tommy, and you're very fond of me. Everybody's fond of their Tommy. But I'm something more than that. I'm a wolf, I'm a vampire, I'm a devouring lion.'

'A what?' cried Charley.

'I'm your Only and most Rapacious Creditor, and I want from you the sum of three thousand five hundred and seventeen pounds sixteen shillings and eleven-pence three-farthings, with interest at the rate of five *per centum* per annum. I've paid all your executions; I've settled with all your tradespeople; I've bought up all your bills, unknown to you; and if you don't pay me, I'll have out a Debtor's Summons in Bankruptcy against you before you're twenty-four hours older. And *that's* what's for breakfast.'

So this is why the old gentleman paid!

Of course Charley had to pay him, interest and all; but there was a very comfortable balance remaining on the right side.

SUSPIRIA

In lately turning over a cookery book for the million, I came upon the following remarkable passage, in which the careful housewife is taught how to distinguish fresh lobsters from stale: 'Lobsters recently caught have always some remains of muscular action in the claws, which may be excited by pressing the eyes with the finger.'

We have all seen these unhappy crustaceans with stout pegs driven into the flesh between the hinges of their claws, and have some of us, I daresay, regretted that the existence of these formidable weapons of aggression and defence should presumably render such a cruel precaution necessary. But the diabolical expedient of squeezing their eyes, in order to excite 'some remains of muscular action' in the quivering limbs of the poor persecuted wretch, had certainly never occurred to me before. And this test, be it observed, is suggested not as the refinement of cruelty of some monster who has devoted his whole life to the study of that art, under the immediate inspiration and tuition of the devil, who is the father of it, but is put forward as the praiseworthy care of a frugal housewife who is preparing some little treat for her husband's supper, and smilingly resorts to this little artifice to protect herself from imposition.

In my innocence I had always fancied that the *ne plus ultra* of culinary cruelty had been reached in the operation of 'crimping' codfish, which consists, I believe, in cutting into the flesh of the still living fish, so that the vitality of the wretched victim may cause the trembling flesh to gape widely asunder—which it will no longer do if the incision be made after death, the passive flesh no longer shrinking away from the dreadful knife—and so causing the gap or crimp. But I confess that this test of the lobster appears to me, taken in connection with the previous pegging of the claws, to graduate still higher in the devil's school, and to merit more distinguished infamy.

Shakespeare must have noticed some horror of a similar kind before he made the Fool advise poor heart-broken Lear to cry to his rising heart 'as the cook did to the eels, when she put them in the paste alive: she rapped 'em on the coxcombs with a stick, and cried, "Down, wantons, down!"' Any fisherman will be familiar with such a method of killing his fish.

I fear that Cowper is now a very unfashionable poet, as he is neither mystical, atheistic, nor erotic; and I daresay that not five

per cent of the present generation have ever read the indignant protest which that 'sweet and guileless spirit' made, just a century ago, against similar abominations:

> 'To make *him* sport,
> To gratify the frenzy of his wrath
> Or his base gluttony, are causes good
> And just in his account why bird and beast
> Should suffer torture, and the streams be dyed
> With blood of their inhabitants impaled.
> . . . . . While he,
> Not satisfied to prey on all around,
> Adds tenfold bitterness to death, by pangs
> Needless, *and first torments ere he devours.*'

That is the gravamen of the charge. We believe ourselves at liberty to 'kill and eat' such of the brute creation as may be necessary to our food (though, for my own part, I confess that I always envy vegetarians the clearness of their conscience in this matter), but we nowhere find any permission to 'torment ere we devour,' to heighten the real or fancied gusto of the food by inflicting horrible tortures on the living animal before we kill it.

Are the Strasburg geese really and actually confined in coops close to the chimney of a fire, so as to counterfeit a tropical heat, and so produce the disease of the liver necessary to make the famous pâtés? Are their feet nailed on to the floors of these coops to prevent their moving about, and so counteracting by exercise the tendency of such treatment? It seems hardly possible that such things *can* be; but still we are assured of their truth. Nay, not very long ago I observed in the papers that some ingenious Frenchman had 'assisted nature' in another way in the fattening of fowls. The wretched bird was placed in a wooden case, and by some diabolical contrivance its mouth was forced open, and a quantity of soft unctuous food injected into its stomach *nolens volens;* a scheme which may remind us of the 'water question' of the Inquisition, wherein the victim was laid upon his back, and an enormous quantity of water forced through a pipe down his throat, until his horrible sufferings compelled him to confess or invent whatever his tormentors desired.

Of course, when the demon of cruelty enters into a man and inspires him, as it seems to have done the officers of the Inquisition, we are not surprised at any depth of wickedness into which he may be assisted to descend. But the curious fact about the things I have noticed is, that they are not performed by any monsters such as these or others with a sense of their enormity, but that they are quietly done from day to day and year to year; and have been so done for centuries, without apparently the slightest misgiving as to their propriety.

Sport, as we know, may make very cruel even those who are not

so under other circumstances; of which, perhaps, the most singular instance is that of Izaak Walton, that saintly linendraper, whom we should have thought little lower than the angels, had it not been for his *Angler*, and some of the directions in that marvellous book. Strange that a man who could write in such a way of the peaceful beauties of his beloved country, and could enter so heartily into the enjoyment and happiness of the birds and beasts around him, who could begin and end his day with prayer, and retain in all his pleasures something of a prayerful spirit, should advise his fisherman, in fastening a live frog by skewering it on to his hook, to handle the wretched reptile 'as though he loved him,' lest he might shorten the span of its sufferings, and consequently of its life, and so render it less attractive to the pike for whom he is supposed to be fishing.

But sport of all kinds comes under a totally different category from cookery, and is practised by a comparatively small number of persons. Millions of tender-hearted women have eaten crimped codfish and pegged lobsters, whose whole souls would revolt from the cruelty of most sports. All that I am pleading for is, not that birds and beasts and fishes should not be eaten by mankind, but only that they should not be tortured first for the indulgence of appetites already sufficiently keen, and needing no such artifices to stimulate them to greater activity or enjoyment.

I think, by the way, that the fisherman's argument that his victims cannot feel the pain of his hook, because a hooked fish which has escaped will sometimes begin feeding again directly afterwards, is hardly conclusive. Do *we* never feed during pain? Will not a man with the gout or toothache eat his dinner after a fashion? and why should not the hooked fish do the same? Yet gout and toothache are very real pains, as most of those who endure them will readily admit. Foxhunters are ready to declare that the hunted fox enjoys the sport of baffling and evading his pursuers. But, you see, the fox himself cannot be consulted on the subject; and until he be adequately represented in the court of inquiry, I think we must decline to accept the *ex-parte* evidence of the other parties to the cause. People are so very apt to attribute their own feelings to others, and so very unable to understand that their pleasure may be some other creature's pain. I daresay the boys in the fable thought that the frogs enjoyed being pelted as much as they did pelting them, and were greatly surprised to learn from the frogs' own lips, that what was fun to boys might be death to frogs.

But if we may judge from the pigeon clubs of the present day, there is a pleasure connected with 'sport' irrespective of the success of the actual sportsman; I mean, the pleasure of the fair spectators in seeing the poor harmless birds brutally butchered. Not long since I observed that the beadle of a London square was imprisoned, with a treadmill *obbligato*, for killing four cats, which had

annoyed the residents in the square by their nocturnal vocalism. Yet the poor man was but performing the functions which he believed to attach to his vocation, although he may not have chosen the most humane method of killing the cats. At the worst, he was not slaughtering a hecatomb of harmless and beautiful birds to while away his vacant hours, nor even applauding, with hands clad in pearl-gray kid, those engaged in that manly and sportsmanlike recreation.

That anatomists should pursue their horrible investigations without much regard to the sufferings of their victims is, I fear, only what we must expect from the ardour of scientific research and their early hospital teachings, although every reader of such records must be struck with the infinitesimal amount of useful or reliable knowledge acquired, compared with the awful mass of suffering involved in the inquiry. Some years ago English readers were horrified at the revelations of the practice of vivisection amongst the veterinary surgeons of the French army. The dreadful story of Majendie and the dog which put its paws round his neck and licked his face, in the vain hope of softening his heart and stopping his cruel operation, will recur to readers of this class of literature. It is far too horrible for the pages of a magazine.

A lady who has been lately ennobled by a title, but whose best patent of nobility is written in the record of her whole life, Lady Burdett-Coutts, has not long since instituted a society in the hope of doing something to ameliorate the sufferings of dumb animals at the hands of their drovers, by offering prizes and small sums of money to those who can produce satisfactory testimonials of their humanity. Not for a moment would I discourage any effort to lessen by one drop that vast sea of misery; but any one who comes at all in contact with the class in question must see how hopeless such an attempt seems to be. Men of that kind appear either to believe that the poor beasts committed to their charge have no more feeling than the trunks of trees, or else they take advantage of a contrary belief to inflict upon them all the suffering in their power. Pig-dealers, standing in the midst of a pen of their wares, will visit every cross which they themselves meet with on the wretched animals; and if a purchaser does not like the goods, or will not give the price asked, the angry dealer cuts the poor little creatures over the ears, as if the fault were personal to themselves. As the day advances too, and beer becomes largely infused into the business of the hour, slanging matches become frequent between adjacent sellers as to the merits of their respective breeds, and the embers of old quarrels are raked up and fanned into a flame. Here, again, the poor pigs are the chief sufferers. Every time their owner gets worsted in the wordy fight, and his ears made to burn with some stinging taunt, *their* ears are made to sympathise by means of the

ready whip, with which instrument the wretch accentuates his own verbal sallies also. So that whether he conquers or is conquered in the flood of abuse, they are sure to bear the brunt equally of victory or defeat.

But, at least, the society in question begins at the right end, which some similar associations can hardly be said to do. It may be very right to punish cruelty to animals by the treadmill and prison diet, but it will never, I think, alter the man who is so punished, except for the worse. If Mr. Wm. Sykes, or any kindred spirit, be punished for ill-treating his donkey, we may be pretty sure that the moment he escapes from prison he will have a private interview of a revengeful character with that donkey, in which the wretched quadruped will pay heavy interest for all that his master has endured.

The same noble lady recently took occasion to deliver a charge to the mistresses leaving Whitelands School, imploring them to teach their children kindness to animals. And here again, surely, she was in the right track :

'Just as the twig is bent, the tree will grow ;'

and I pray that the seed sown in deference to her request may bear fruit a hundredfold.*

Nor is this a trifling matter. Be sure that the cry of all these dumb creatures which are unnecessarily or wantonly tortured is continually ascending to the ears of Him who is their Creator no less than ours. We may be certain that He, without whom not a sparrow falls to the ground, will not for ever disregard their groans :

'And God, some future day,
Will reckon with us roundly for the abuse
Of what He deems no mean or trivial trust.'

* Since this article was written a more hopeful effort has been made by publishing a series of reading books for elementary schools, designed especially to teach kindness to animals, and called the 'Humanity Series.' They are edited by the Rev. F. O. Morris, the bird-loving correspondent of the *Times*, and appear well calculated for the purpose in question. The only hope is to drop the germ of such learning into infant minds, which are more often cruel for want of thought than want of heart.

THROUGH THE BREAKERS

BY MARY CECIL HAY, AUTHOR OF 'VICTOR AND VANQUISHED,' 'HIDDEN PERILS,' ETC.

I.

were sisters only by adoption; yet I know that the love between in those old days, was as great as it could have been if the mo- s, of whom only sweet memories were left us, had been one; as if my father had been Elsie's father too, instead of having fully adopted the orphan child, and brought her from a poor and less life to share our happy home. I suppose I always knew he could never grow to love her just as he loved his own child; even if I had felt he did so, I should only have rejoiced. I am king now of the old times, and speaking, too, when I can see those times lying in the full sunlight of the unsuspicious love we bore other. We two adopted sisters were a strong contrast. Elsie a bright light-hearted girl, with a sunny prettiness, and a happy e for ever rippling on her lips and sparkling in her eyes. We the same age within a year, yet I always felt much the elder, my nature was silent and concentrated, dreamy to a fault, and dfast—so steadfast, that if I had had one aim to pursue, however less, I should have pursued it silently to my death. Yet under quietness, I knew, even then, that there slept a passionate inten- of feeling which gave me one power greater than Elsie possessed, power of suffering. She won love and friendship; while I stood ted, with only her love and my father's to encircle me. She won iration and esteem from all, and I knew that this was well, be- e suffering to her was weakening as illness; under it she lay ive and helpless, while I met it as I would meet a sorrowful d, and made my step firm, and my heart strong, to support it. all this was in the old times, before she won (easily, as she won lse) the only love which could have gladdened me; and before chill gray cloud dropped down between us.

He did not live with us at first, but my father, when his own h failed, persuaded his young partner (to whom the mills d entirely belong after his death) to come and live with us in great house, upon the hill, at the foot of which the mills lay. Horace Capon came, and the whole active management of the fell into his hands; and although he was a young man, my r felt the utmost confidence in him. The master was safe elying on Mr. Capon, the men would sometimes say to us, we wandered, as we liked to do, over the busy noisy mills; he

was one to be trusted. We used to smile at the expression, seemed to them to mean so much, and when Horace would j from the offices, what wonder was it if we saw a new power handsome face, and in his tone of genial yet irresistible auth And could we warn each other of the feeling which was g equally in both our hearts? Could we always remember that of us this feeling must end in bitter and humiliating pain? to me that the pain came at last; very gradually, because me such a long, long time to believe it after it was told; y suddenly, because I had forgotten, as I said, that this love f race, which was growing equally in both our hearts, *must* one of us in bitter and humiliating pain. He had always tre alike; coming home to us in the evenings, bringing a new e of strength and gaiety; interesting us no less than my fath amusing and brightening my father no less than us. The more laughter when he chatted with Elsie; but more earn when he talked with me. If he sang oftener with Elsie, h oftener with me; and if he fell beside Elsie oftener when we together, it was beside my chair that he would draw his own w read aloud to us at night. And so the months sped on most for us, so equally loved and cared for that what wonder was said, that we forgot how this must end in a bitter humiliatin for one?

I forget how it was that there first dawned on me the kno of one of my father's motives in having Horace Capon to li in the house which he was eventually to occupy as master mills. I think he told me himself, one day, saying that was even now as a son to him, the one man in all the world t he could most willingly give his daughter; and adding that h Elsie would always find a happy home with us. I listened until the loving plan was all unfolded; then I went away alone for hours, thinking of it, my cheeks burning even in n tude, and my heart beating rapidly. What a future that dream of! From that hour, when my dreams lost their vag and this one lay marked out in brightest hues before me, conscious of a new shyness in my manner to Horace; a t quite new to me, yet the most natural result of that dream wh buried now so deeply and so fixedly in my heart. I thought El too thoroughly wrapped up in her own bright thoughts to noti yet I knew that our love for each other then was true and unsus But the day came at last when, after one flash of nameles that cloud fell slowly and heavily down between us.

I had found Elsie sitting in the morning sunshine, w Horace; so I stood above her, watching too, in silence. He at the gate for a moment, to raise his hat with a smile, then on down the hill, and disappeared through one of the great

Louis Huard, del. Edmund Eva

"I MUST TELL YOU [illegible] RET," SHE SOBBED.

the mills. Elsie rose then, but I was dreaming still, just as I had stood, a little way back from the window, my eyes upon the spot where Horace disappeared.

'Margaret,' said Elsie softly, pausing as she faced me, 'your eyes look warm and glad now; and—because Horace could not see—you answered his smile with one as bright as his. Then why have you been cold to him, and distant?'

'Cold!' I echoed in a whisper, and I could not bring my eyes back to her face; 'Elsie dear, you do not understand.'

She had both her hands upon my shoulders now, and her eyes were reading mine eagerly—ah, with such pained and breathless eagerness!

'O, Margaret,' she cried, catching her breath in a great tearless sob, 'tell me I am wrong! Say that I cannot read *that* in your face! O, no, no, no; it is not *that!*'

I put one arm around her, wondering that she should be so moved to read the secret which I must have guarded so much better than she had guarded hers.

'Elsie dear,' I said, laying my cheek upon her bright bent head, 'there was nothing in my face which need have given you this sudden pain.'

'O yes,' she cried, 'O Margaret, yes, I saw.'

She was weeping sorely, there with her eyes hidden on my breast, and her trembling fingers clasping me even to pain.

'Elsie, what grieves you so?' I asked; 'I cannot understand it.'

'I—I must tell you, Margaret,' she sobbed, keeping her face still hidden, 'I must tell you; but—I never guessed—'

'Tell me,' I whispered fondly, when she paused.

'Horace—Horace says—' she was uttering the words very rapidly below her breath, and with her head drooping so upon my breast that it was not easy to hear them—'Horace says—I mean he asked me—only yesterday—only yesterday, to be—his wife! O Margaret, I love him more than all the world; and yet I wish—I [illegible]—'

[illegible] think I put her gently from me, and made a feint of smiling; [illegible] think that—groping blindly in my great misery—I spent that [illegible]ust as I had spent other days which had been crowned with love [illegible]hope and pleasure. I think that I gave Horace my hand that [illegible], and told him he would be very happy with Elsie; and I think [illegible]t was only Elsie who cried when we bade each other good-night. [illegible] am not sure—I am sure of nothing save the anguished aching [illegible]my heart and head, and how, when that had been mine for [illegible]ny, many days, a great lonely coldness came and wrapped itself [illegible]out my heart.

It was a happy and unruffled courtship, that of Horace's. My [illegible]her gave his free consent to the marriage, and breathed no word

of that disappointed plan of his; and my father's men, who all loved Elsie for her bright face and winning ways, made her young lover's heart rejoice with their praises of the wife whom he had chosen. And, day by day, it was my lot to watch this happy courtship, living entirely apart in my own inward life, and growing day by day more silent and more cold. But I felt that they would not notice this; it could not pain *them*, so closely were they bound now in each other. When Horace came home, of what value was my presence to Elsie—though until then she had liked to linger with me? When Elsie was near, what thought of Horace's would stray to me? Ah, what a bitter solitary time it was, and what hopeless and despairing thoughts possessed me! Why had he been given to her? His love was all the world to me; and she could have been made happy with other love, and would have turned brightly to accept another life. Sometimes I told myself that if he had loved me best, only for one day, I would have made it grow to such a strong and all-engrossing love, that it could never change; a love beside which this happy and untroubled affection that he bore to Elsie would be a shadow only—*if* only the love had once been there to take root.

Never could he guess at any of these dreams which haunted me, but I noticed that he often now looked at me with a new and curious intentness, which warned me that this hidden selfish pain was changing even my outward self. It must have been this change which prompted them to plan for Elsie and me to travel to the seaside, and stay there until the summer waned.

If they had let me go alone—there or anywhere—I thought I might have gained health and strength and better thoughts; but Elsie would not leave me. The days had been hard enough to bear at home, but they were harder here. If I had been left to sit alone in silence on the cliffs, I could have loved perhaps, instead of chafing at, the lonely solemn sympathy of the sea; but Elsie seemed always near me, talking of home and Horace, until I nearly—ah, so very, very nearly!—grew to hate her very presence, dreading every word that her bright voice should utter, and wearying utterly of her smiling face. Left alone with her, and hearing her constantly speak of Horace in that tone of confident childlike happiness, it could not be but that I soon must hate her in my heart.

II.

My father and Horace were to be with us in the afternoon, and in the morning Elsie and I went out to bathe together. There was no sunshine on the sea, but the water was fresh and full of motion, just as we liked it; so we laughed when we were told that there was danger of a sudden squall that day; that very few ladies had ventured out, and even they were returning now.

'Not that there's any danger, miss,' the man said, as he hooked

his horse's harness to the caravan which I had chosen; 'only don't you think you'd better take one of the women with you?'

'We are not afraid; are we, Margaret?' smiled Elsie; 'and we help each other quite enough.'

Then she gave orders for her own machine to be wheeled close to mine in the sea, and ran up the steps with a smile and nod at me.

How well I remember the look of the sea that day, as I stepped into it, and Elsie came up to me with her dancing step and laughing eyes! So gray and sombre the water was, so wide and restless; so wide, so secret, and so safe. I shook away Elsie's clinging hands.

'Why do you hold *me?*' I cried. 'Go away; do not come so close to me again.'

'No, no; give me your hands, Margaret,' she said, rising merrily, and shaking back her hair, after the noisy wave had passed over us and left us free to speak again. 'Do you forget that they feared a sudden gust? We shall be all right if we are hand in hand.'

'We are quite safe so, and it is pleasanter,' I said, and threw myself beneath the water, trying hard to drown the happy sound of Elsie's laughter.

How wide and secret the sea was! and what a little thing she looked there, battling merrily with its waters, so strong against her little shielding hands! And what a horrible longing possessed me, yet what an over-mastering fear! Fear of what? Fear of the waters which I loved? Fear of Elsie's tiny power? Ah, no; what fear I had was fear of myself.

We were standing quite still, telling each other how calm the sea had grown all in a minute, and still with that distance between us, which I kept so carefully, when the squall came. A sudden violent rush of wind swept across the waters towards the shore; the waves reared themselves above us, then swooped down and dashed us helplessly upon the sand.

'Margaret! Margaret!'—I could hear Elsie's call as the great wave rolled on—'Your hands!—hold me, hold me!'

I fought my way to her, and took her hands, then I looked wildly round. The bathing-machines seemed to be miles away from us now, and one was thrown upon its side by that strong rush of wind and water. If we could reach it, we might support ourselves, perhaps, until help came. The shore looked like another world, to my hot anguished eyes, so far away, so far away. What was this singing in my ears? Was it the water still? I was strong and fearless now; no wave, however fierce and strong, would swallow me. The water was but shallow after all,—unless we fell.

'O Margaret, take me in your arms—my breath is going! You are so strong and calm; don't leave me, Margaret!'

Calm! There was such a tempest in my heart, that this tempest in the waters was as nothing to it.

More closely still I held her now, but held h
waters must pass over her in their rush. My lips were ti
my eyes upon that second mighty wave that came so
gulf us.

'I am holding you, Elsie! Close your eyes, for it

Bent and frail, she stood in my embrace, with he
while the huge wave, which I could calmly stand and
rolling on behind her. Then I held her down, firmly
beneath the water, battling the while for my own lif
When at last the sea grew calm again, and we were tos
at its wild strong will, I had still my hands upon her s
under the waters I could see a white dead face. And
had not failed me even yet, for I was holding her s
found us, and lifted us together; whispering eagerly
living, but that the other had been for a long time dea

III.

I DID not see Horace for a long time, so that wher
let me see him, the first bitterness of his grief wa
asked me many things about that day, and I told him
terrible truth that I had killed her. I told him how El
to me in her fear, when that awful wind swept so sudde
sea; but how she had grown so weak at last and des
she fell with the second wave, and never rose again.
side me while I told him this, and then it seemed to
to him to sit beside me; and at last I—watching his f
sorrow fade, and the old look of content return to
it was in silence that he sat beside me, and this sil

whelming force. He had forgotten me! Before his grave eyes was the bright childish face of her who had won his first love. He was wishing *she* had been saved, and I lost. Why had he brought me here where I could see the white drowned face, just as I saw it look when I held it still below the waters, after the angry death had passed? Should I be obliged to see it thus before me all my life?

Silently, as we had stood there, we turned from the grave side by side; then suddenly Horace clasped me in his arms and kissed me. So tenderly, and yet so passionately, he kissed me, under the quiet stars, that at that moment I knew I had won what I had so long craved for vainly. He had learned to give me a stronger and more fervent love than he had ever given to Elsie.

IV.

Horace and I had been married nearly a year, and this was Christmas-eve. My husband had been away for two or three days, but I knew he would return for Christmas-day, and so I sat waiting for him. Always I longed for his return when he had left me, but hardly ever so intensely as I longed for it this night. The wind was blowing fitfully; now rising in sudden gusts which brought back to me that horrible morning in the sea; and now lying lulled and calm, as it had been upon that autumn night when Horace and I had stood beside Elsie's grave in that strange silence which he broke at last to tell me with what strength and tenderness he loved me.

So strangely nervous and so timid I had grown, that when I heard my husband's step at last, I ran to meet him just as if he came as a deliverer.

'Frightened, my darling?' he questioned tenderly, as he led me back into the lighted room. 'Tempestuous, is not it? but so beautiful out of doors. The moon is full, and the sky exquisite. Have you been out at all to-day?'

'No, Horace.'

'Then, when dinner is over, I will take you. It will do you good, if you will put on plenty of furs; and it will do me good too, to have you walking at my side again. You are not afraid of this wind, my darling?'

'No.'

'And I love it. Ah, how good it is to be home with you again, my wife!'

'Do you miss me when we are apart, then, Horace?'

I asked it eagerly, yet I knew well that the time *had* come of which I used to dream—he lavished on me now far more intensity of affection than he had ever given to his first love.

'Miss you!' he echoed, folding me within his arms and laying his lips most tenderly on mine. 'There is no minute in any hour

of my absence in which I do *not* miss you, darling; and if I tried to say how much, I should but fail.'

'Because you love me so, Horace?'

'Because I love you so, my cherished wife.'

'You never loved any one before, as you love me?'

'I never have—I never can—love any one as I love you, my own beloved.'

I knew it so well; but still I loved to hear him say it.

The moon was riding gloriously through the frosty sky, when we started out together. Horace had himself fastened the soft furs about my neck, kissing me as he did so, and my heart beat joyously and proudly as I leaned on his strong arm, and felt that I was very precious to him.

So earnestly and happily were we talking, so perfect was the beauty of the night, that I had not noticed where we were going, until we stopped before a gate I knew, and Horace bent to open it.

'We have wandered here almost unconsciously, my darling,' he said; 'but we will go in and stand a moment in the quietness beside Elsie's grave. In our own intense happiness, we would not forget her upon this beautiful Christmas-night; and it is her birthday too, you remember, Margaret.'

I shrank aside, and whispered, 'Not to-night—not on Christmas-night—not on her birthday;' but Horace gently led me on, until we stood once more together beside that great square stone beneath the cedar. It was very chill and gloomy there, and I crept closer to my husband's side; very chill and very gloomy, even with his strong protecting arm around me. Why had he brought me here, when we had both learned to forget, and had grown so happy? If he would but speak—if he would but talk to me, and chase away these haunting memories which had not visited me since, in this very spot, he had told me how he loved me! If he would only tell me so again—loudly, that the words might drown this moaning in my ears, this rushing of the sea about my head, this cry of a faint and dying voice! Why had he breathed her name at all to-night, and raised this awful memory?

'O Horace, Horace, see the white dead face!'

My cry had not broken his long silence, so I knew it was uttered only in my heart. I looked up eagerly, that the glance of his kind eyes might give me courage; but that drowned face had come between us.

'O Horace,' I cried, groping with my hands, 'take it away; take it away! She would have you save her, and let me go!'

'Margaret, my darling, are you ill?'

I heard the question in my husband's soft kind tones, but there was something else I heard far more distinctly.

'Listen!' I cried, turning to face the blast of wind which came sweeping over the valley below; 'listen!—listen!'

I waited for its coming with my arms outstretched, and when he storm had passed, and left me standing so, I fancied death had pared me once again, as it had done at sea, and I knew why. That tory was to be told to Horace; here, by the grave where the voices oaned; now, before that second gust came sweeping by which had rought death before, and might bring death again. The white ead face beneath that stone cried out for justice now; the voices f the wind and sea cried out aloud their accusation. I had a task o do in the lull of that great storm, and I must do it. I drew away om my husband's side, and stood opposite him in the shadow of he cedar; my eyes fixed steadily upon him, and my words slow nd clear.

Quite still he stood to listen, while I told him all; quite still ntil I had finished; then, after an utter terrible pause, he fell n his knees beside the stone, and hid his face upon it. I did ot speak or move until he rose, after a long, long time; then I agerly and piteously scanned his face, that I might glean only a ray f hope. Even in the shadow—for he was leaning now against the ee—I could see how rigid and how coldly white his face had own.

'O Horace,' I cried, falling on the grass before him, and apealing to him with my burning hands outstretched, 'O my husband, l the sin there may have been, *you* caused. If I had not loved m—'

Coldly and sternly he interrupted me, bidding me come away om beside that grave.

'O Horace, take me back to your heart!' I pleaded. 'Why did u bring me here? You would never have known, if you had not ought me here to-night, and we should have been happy now—as were before. O Horace, I am the same Margaret whom you ved so dearly an hour ago—only a little hour ago—so dearly, u said; so dearly! *I* remember it, I remember every word. You ssed me every minute of every hour of our separation, you said O Horace, remember that, and take me back. See how I have ved *you*. If you had—had even done what I have done, tempted your love for me, I should have wept and prayed for pardon for u, and comforted you, I think; and clung to you and pitied you; t *never* ceased to love you—never, never! O my husband, let come slowly; love me a little—just a little—until I can bear its ing taken all away!'

I pushed my hair away from my throbbing temples; something s burning in my head, and the noise the sea made in rushing er Elsie's face, was deafening me—deafening and blinding me, I could not see Horace now; nothing but a dark still shadow; d between it and me, a girl with long wet hair and ashen cheeks.

'O Horace, take me back! We can be happy still—we know

parching lips; 'we cannot be separated—you and I; we
you know; they cannot separate *us*.'

'We are separated *now*,' he answered slowly; 'sepa
and for ever.'

'O no, Horace, no!' I cried, appealing to him once
eager hands and eyes. 'You will take me back? It
sake I did it, and you have loved me since, when I w
I am now. You valued my love then. Ah, yes, I kn
for that knowledge was my happiness, and *I* could not
You valued my love then; O, take it now, my husbar
husband, whom no one can take from me—when it i
times more earnest than it has ever been before!'

I could see his face in the moonlight now, and I
was no hope for me.

'Horace!' I cried, with such a cry as might have
the cold dead around us, 'Horace—forgive!'

Coldly he drew back from me, and then—I laugh
loudly and shrilly, there in the silence of the calm and be
But when I saw his stern white face grow colder still,
why I had laughed.

'Nothing can separate us, Horace,' I whispered,
my vacant gaze upon him, and smiling as I thought that
whisper must comfort him. 'Nothing can separate us no
frightened, Horace; you are my husband, and I will n
Did you dream that I could be so cruel? I was not hal
her as that would be.'

He turned from me, shuddering through all his fran
I knew that the love, which had been my very life, was d

V.

I HAVE been very, very ill. I wake to the knowledge slowly, as I lie and listen to the hushed breath and softened footsteps in my room. I wake to it very, very slowly, dreaming a wonderful dream the while.

I am lying in my own room at home, and Elsie sits beside my bed, just as she did when I was ill once in the old past—so many years ago; and my father comes for tidings of his child, with his eyes dim and anxious, just as I used to see them in that far-back time. Horace is living with us, in this dream of mine, just as he did then; and he, too, waits for tidings, and comes to look upon me with a soft slow step. Ah, if this dream may last a little longer; because, when I awake, my husband's face will meet me stern and cold, as it must be through all the rest of my sin-shadowed life; and instead of this bright face beside my bed, will be the memory of that drowned head I saw beneath the waters. It is far better to be dying, and to dream this dream, than grow quite strong and well, and meet my misery again. It is such a beautiful, beautiful dream!

I am lying now under the beech upon the lawn, and the golden leaves fall softly on me one by one; very softly, as if they fell a long, long way—perhaps from heaven itself. The sky is bright and blue up there above them, and the sunlight creeps amid their shelter to lay its warm sweet kiss upon my face. There are no fierce rushing storms of wind in this beautiful dream, and no driving waves. There is only peace and calm and sunshine, and the rare sweet fragrance of the autumn flowers I love. I dare not speak, lest I should break my dream.

I see my father standing against the golden beech, and watching me, with the old look of love upon his face. Elsie is beside me still, as she has been all through this peaceful dream, and in her eyes is shining such a look of loving pitiful compassion, that I cannot even trust myself to meet it, lest it should bring the tears, for tears would waken me. And now, across the lawn, comes Horace; his face the kind and pleasant face of long ago, the face I loved when I was innocent—*so* long ago! He comes up to me—softly as they all come in this dream of mine—and I read the old friendship in his eyes and something more; not hatred and contempt, ah, no, but a great tenderness and a great compassion, and something that looks almost like awe. I remember the different face which I shall see when I awake, and silently I pray that it may be God's will I die before the waking comes.

My hands are very weak and thin and wasted, and when he takes one into his, and kneels beside my couch, I can see the pity and the fear which darken Elsie's eyes. My voice is low and failing, but at last they understand my question, reading it more from my eyes than

from my lips; and Elsie answers it in a whisper, her warm lips touching my cheek and forehead between the words:

'No dream, my darling; no dream. We have you with us, and we are nursing you back to health again. If care and love—the truest fondest love, my dear—can give you strength, then you will soon be your own self again.'

So the words run, in this summer dream of mine. I have no pain, only a great faintness. If I were a leaf upon the beech above me, at the first faint breath of wind, I should fall just so—softly and slowly to the ground.

'Margaret,' Elsie whispers, when her sweet face comes between those reddening leaves and my wide upturned eyes, 'do you remember that day we were together in the sea, when the wind rose so suddenly? I want to tell you, O my dear, what the memory of that day has been to me.'

I am awaking now—awaking with an icy shiver. In one moment my dream will be over—my beautiful summer dream.

'Tell me slowly—slowly,' I plead, my broken words most eager in their utter weakness. 'No—let Horace tell; then I shall be—awake. Tell me all, Horace.'

'It is too much to tell to-day,' he whispers, wrapping a shawl about me tenderly, for he does not know that I lie shivering there because I know I am awaking; 'how can I tell, in a few simple words, that brave unselfish act of yours! How can I speak calmly, even yet, of how you saved my darling at the risk of your own life; of how, when she fainted and fell, you rescued her, and held her safe above the water until help came; then how *you* put her in safety, and—your strength all worn—sank down yourself, exhausted and unconscious; of how the fiercest wave of all came then, and we—we were barely in time to save you! How can I tell of this, and of our gratitude and love?'

Both their faces are near mine, full of the love he has just spoken of, and—is it the gratitude too? My eyes gather a little warmth and life from theirs. There is a feeling, utterly strange to me, upon my thin white lips—they are breaking into a smile.

'This is true, then? This is true, and the—the other was the dream?'

'All this is true, my darling; and we are true; and the sunshine and the flowers, they are all true. Everything is true, except those terrible delirious fancies which have been with you in your fever. *That* was the dream; but it has passed now, and all the fancies have passed too. Ah, there is a little look of returning health at last. You are coming back to us from the gates of death—O my dear, my dear, we shall be happy once again!'

LOVE-TOKENS

A CHAPTER OF INSTANCES

How knows Speed that his master, Sir Valentine, is in love? Marry, by these special marks: that he wreathes his arms like a malcontent, relishes a love-song like a robin redbreast, walks alone like one that had the pestilence, sighs like a schoolboy that had lost his A B C, fasts like one under a regimen, watches like one that fears robbery, and speaks puling like a beggar at Hallowmas. 'You were wont, when you laughed, to crow like a cock; when you walked, to walk like one of the lions; when you fasted, it was presently after dinner; when you looked sadly, it was for want of money; and now you are metamorphosed with a mistress, that, when I look on you, I can hardly think you my master.' Boyet's list of reasons for alleging the King of Navarre to be in love is more rhetorically amplified, but less succinct and compendious. The shepherd Sylvius tells Corin (now are we in Arden) with *experto-crede* fervour:

> 'If thou remember'st not the slightest folly
> That ever love did make thee run into,
> Thou hast not loved:
> Or if thou hast not sat as I do now,
> Wearying thy hearer in thy mistress' praise,
> Thou hast not loved:
> Or if thou hast not broke from company
> Abruptly, as my passion now makes me,
> Thou hast not loved.'

Rosalind's, that is to say Ganymede's, uncle (still are we in Arden) taught the knowledge of a man in love by these marks: a lean cheek, a sunken eye, an unsociable spirit, a neglected beard, ungartered hose, an unbuttoned sleeve, an untied shoe, and other significances in costume. The confederates in *Much Ado about Nothing* make a main point of the costume test. If Benedick be not in love, argues Claudio, there is no believing old signs: 'He brushes his hat o' mornings; what should that bode?'

> '*Leon.* He looks younger than he did by the loss of a beard.
> *D. Pedro.* Nay, he rubs himself with civet. Can you smell him out by that?
> *Claud.* That's as much as to say the sweet youth's in love.
> *D. Pedro.* The greatest note of it is his melancholy.
> *Claud.* And when was he wont to wash his face? . . . Nay, but his jesting spirit, which is now crept into a lutestring, and now governed by stops.
> *D. Pedro.* Indeed, that tells a heavy tale for him. Conclude, conclude he is in love.'

But conclusions the most contrary are come to as regards the significance of dress; sometimes point device being the proof of passion, and sometimes slovenly undress, disorder, disarray. When Mr. Foker junior found Miss Amory bewitching, his valet found him very hard indeed to please in his out-door morning costume; he became particularly severe and snappish about his toilette; he tried, and cursed, pantaloons of many different stripes, checks, and colours; all the boots were villanously varnished, the shirts too 'loud' in pattern. He scented his linen and person with peculiar richness; and great was his valet's astonishment when, after some blushing and hesitation on Harry's part, the young gentleman asked, 'I say, Anatole, when I engaged you, didn't you—hem—didn't you say that you could dress—hem—dress hair?' And on the valet's acquiescing, Yes, he could,—'Cherchy alors une paire de tongs—et—curly moi un pew,' was Mr. Foker's command, preparatory to a morning call in Grosvenor-place. There was a critical period in the career of that Mr. Sawyer who 'went to the shires,' when he gave up dressing in the rough-and-ready style which had heretofore been at once his glory and his peculiarity, and began instead to affect a strange refinement of costume, bordering on effeminacy. 'His boots were thinner and much tighter than of old; he turned his collars over his neckcloth after the prevailing fashion, thereby imparting to his physiognomy an expression of romantic vacuity; anointed his head till it shone again; affected gloves on all occasions; and set up a ring.' In short, his exterior altogether was as symptomatic of his disorder as that of Benedick. So of another latter-day hero we read how frequent all at once became his self-examinations in the glass over the mantelpiece; how often he caught himself doing this, and, half-chuckling inwardly, acknowledged that it was a bad sign. But though the artist laughed, he tweaked out the most prominent gray hairs in his beard, and gave his necktie a more knowing twist, and removed the dabs of stray paint from his shooting-coat. 'Straws thrown up show which way the wind blows, and even such little sacrifices to vanity as these were in Geoffrey Ludlow very strong signs indeed.' Sainte Beuve tells us that so long as the *tendre relation* of Benjamin Constant with Madame de Charrière lasted, his toilette had not been in any degree an article *de rigueur:* she readily overlooked his sins of omission in *le negligé*. When at a later period she saw him becoming dressy and dandified, she one day told him *tristement:* 'Benjamin, vous faites votre toilette, vous ne m'aimez plus!'

Experienced Pan tells Psyche, in the *Metamorphoses*, that her paleness, deep as snow we cannot see the roses through,—her sigh of quick returning, her eyes that seem themselves two souls in mourning,—prove that she loves too well, and bitterly. One of the epodes of Horace deals with a state of feeling characterised by aver-

n from jovial good fellowship, and languor, and silence, and deep-ıwn sighs :

> 'Conviviorum et pœnitet,
> In queis amantem et languor et silentium
> Arguit, et latere petitus imo spiritus.'

.e deep-drawn breath is a notable symptom in La Fontaine's fable *Tircis and Amarante:*

> 'L'amour. Ce mot est beau ! dites-moi quelques marques
> A quoi je le pourrai connaître : que sent-on ?
> Des peines près de qui le plaisir des monarques
> Est ennuyeux et fade: on s'oublie, on se plaît
> Toute seule en une forêt.
> Se mire-t-on près d'un rivage,
> Ce n'est pas soi qu'on voit ; on ne voit qu'une image
> Qui sans cesse revient, et qui suit en tous lieux:
> Pour tout le reste on est sans yeux.
> Il est un berger du village
> Dont l'abord, dont la voix, dont le nom fait rougir:
> On soupire à son souvenir;
> On ne sait pas pourquoi, cependant on soupire.'

On Byron's authority, a slight blush, a soft tremor, a calm kind gentle feminine delight, and shown more in the eyelids than the es, resigned rather to hide what pleases most unknown, are the st tokens (to a modest mind) of Love, when seated on his loveliest rone, a sincere woman's breast. The ooze-born goddess in Keats ves comfort to Endymion by the enumeration of certain infallible ns ; an idle tongue, a humid eye, and steps luxurious, where these e new and strange, are ominous. 'Ay, I have seen these signs one of heaven, when others were all blind.' Burns prays his fair e :

> 'Then let the sudden bursting sigh the heartfelt pang discover,
> And in the keen yet tender eye, O read th' imploring lover !'

ıre beginnings Arthur H. Clough finds when panting sighs the som fill, and hands by chance united thrill at once, with one deli-ıus pain, the pulses and the nerves of twain ; when eyes that erst uld meet with ease now seek, yet, seeking, shyly shun ecstatic nscious unison. As to the *silentium,* 'Ah, that silence !' exclaims musing modern, who bids us not listen to hear whom a woman ıises to know where her heart is, not ask for whom she expresses e most earnest enthusiasm ; but if there be one she once knew ll whose name she never speaks,—if she seem to have an instinct avoid every occasion of its mention;—if, when you speak, she ps into silence and changes the subject,—why, look there for nething ; just as, when going through deep meadow-grass, a bird s ostentatiously out before you, you may know her nest is not re, but far off, under distant tufts of fern and buttercup, through ich she has crept with a silent flutter in her spotted breast to act pretty little falsehood before you. Sergeant Dunham is no subtle

interpreter of signs and tokens when he pronounces his daughter devoted to the Pathfinder from evidence such as this: 'When I speak of him to the girl, she always looks me full in the face; chimes in with everything I say in his favour; and has a frank open way with her, which says as much as if she half-considered him already as a husband.' Harry more shrewdly tells his wife of Nina Gordon, in a later American fiction, that he considers that young lady caught, because 'she runs on abusing the man, after her sort; and she's so very earnest and positive in telling me she don't like him.' Analogous signs are suggested in one of Frédéric Soulié's books: 'Celui-là on l'accuse sans raison, comme on le défend sans raison: on lui fait un tort aujourd'hui de ce qu'on lui eût demandé la veille; celui-là on le raille, on le plaint, on le vante, on le dédaigne; celui-là, enfin, on l'aime.' Gascoigne can assure Mr. John Easy of Agnes being enamoured of him on this ground, that whenever he was out of the room she never spoke a word, but sat there as melancholy as a sick monkey; the moment he came in again, she beamed out as glorious as the sun, and was all life and spirit. 'I thought people were always melancholy when they were in love,' observes Jack. And the reply is, 'When those they love are out of their presence.' Denys, the quick-witted man-at-arms in Mr. Reade's story of *Cloister and Hearth*, instructs his young companion Gerard in two obvious signs of love on the part of the mistress of the Tête d'Or. 'When thou wast gone, she sat a-thinking and spoke not. A sure sign of love in one of her sex, for of all things else they speak ere they think. Also, her voice did sink exceeding low in discoursing of thee, and murmured sweetly; another infallible sign. The bolt hath struck and rankles in her; O be joyful!' Master Ripton Thompson, in the *Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, being perturbed in mind by the rick-burning scrape he has got into, is misread by his sister Letty, whose study of the aspects of love, and of the way young people should look, and of the things they should do under the dominion of the passion, is not much assisted by its outward development in the supposed love-stricken youth. 'I'm sure,' she thought, 'I shall never be like that. He bounds in his seat. He never looks comfortable. He seems to hate us all, and does nothing but mumble his food, and growl and frown. If that's love, I can't do it,' is the sorrowful conclusion of her reflections.

Two or three chapters later we have Sir Austin investigating the state of mind, or heart, of his son Richard, whose 'ordeal' gives a name as well as backbone to the story; and the baronet questions the lad's groom as to his young master's proceedings out of doors. Tom Bakewell reports of young master accordingly, that he 'do ride like fire every day to Pig's Snout,' naming the highest hill in the neighbourhood, 'and stand there and stare, never movin', like a mad un. And then hoam agin all slack, as if he'd been beaten in a race

by summody.' To the interrogation, Did he look east or west? Tom replied that he had not marked: 'He seemed for to look where he could look fur away.' And 'There is no woman in that,' muses the baronet; 'he would have ridden back as hard as he went had there been a woman in it. He would shun vast expanses, and seek shade, concealment, solitude! The desire for distances betokens emptiness and undirected hunger: when the heart is possessed by an image we fly to wood and forest like the guilty.' Martinus Scriblerus being positive that the young nobleman was in love, 'How can that be,' said the aunt, 'when he converses almost with no one but himself?' 'Say you so?' rejoined the doctor; 'why, then he is in love with himself—one of the most common cases in the world.' Is he jealous that his acquaintance do not behave themselves with respect enough? will he bear jokes and innocent freedoms? By no means: a familiar appellation makes him angry; if you shake him a little roughly by the hand, he is in a rage; but if you chuck him under the chin, he will return you a box on the ear. 'Then the case is plain: he has the true pathognomick sign of love—jealousy; for nobody will suffer his mistress to be treated at that rate.' Subject and object are confounded, or identified, in this philosophy. The *amoroso* is *penseroso* after the orthodox lover's pattern, be it he or she. As with the damzell in Spenser, when

> 'Sad, solemne, sowre, and full of fancies fraile
> She waxe, yet wist she nether how nor why;
> She wist not, silly mayd, what she did aile,
> Yet wist she was not well at ease, perdy;
> Yet thought it was not love, but some melàncholy.'

In dull corners she enclosed herself, as one in wilful bale for ever buried. Love it must be, 'as sure I read by knowen signes and passions which I see,' argued that aged nurse of hers, whose name was Glaukè hight. When Mrs. Poyntz bluntly assures Dr. Denwick that he is in love, and is asked her warrant for such an assurance: 'The signs are unmistakable,' she tells him; 'you are altered in your manner, even in the expression of your face, since I last saw you; your manner is generally quiet and observant; it is now restless and distracted. Your expression of face is generally proud and serene; it is now humbled and troubled. You have something on your mind—an anxiety that is remote from your profession, that touches your heart, and is new to it.' Mrs. Little reads after the same rule the looks and gestures of Grace Carden, whom she observes to be restless and listless by turns—her body in one place, her mind in another. 'Sometimes she knitted her brow; and a young girl seldom does that unless she is thwarted in her love. And I'll tell you a surer sign still: sometimes tears came, for no visible reason, and stood in her eyes.' Madame de Montalais detects the *penchant* of Louise in her preference of the least fre-

sad, pensive, and solitary.* We have Frank Osbaldiston conscious of his jealousy of the contemptible lout Thorn his eager scrutiny of every movement of Diana Vernon's, a 'all these, like Benedick's brushing his hat of a morning, that the sweet youth was in love.' We have Lord Ethe serting that every one can tell a love-letter by the outsi ever received one, it being always folded hurriedly, and fully, and the direction manifesting a kind of tremulou that marks the state of the writer's nerves. Or again, to Miss Austen, we have Lizzy Bennet expatiating on M obvious attachment to Jane; how, at his own ball, he o or three young ladies by not asking them to dance; ' to him twice myself, without receiving an answer. Co finer symptoms? Is not general incivility the very essen Then, too, her Emma Woodhouse—'I certainly must b love,' she muses. 'This sensation of listlessness, wea pidity, this disinclination to sit down and employ mysel ing of everything being dull and insipid about the house be in love.' A little, at least; in the initial term, th

* A parallel occurs in the same author's *Surgeon's Daughter*, whe is described giving her attentions more freely and frankly to Adam whom she laughed, chatted, and danced at her ease, while to Dick M conduct was more shy and distant.

Adam Bede is assured by his shrewd old mother of Dinah's pref to his brother, and by these tokens: 'I can see as she doesna behave she does tow'rt Seth. She makes no more o' Seth's coming a-nigh were Gyp [the dog]; but she's all of a tremble when thee't a-sittin' d breakfast and a-lookin' at her.' 'But thee canstna be sure as the tre

stage, the introductory chapter, if no more. According to Longfellow, it is difficult to know at what moment love begins—less difficult to know that it has begun. A thousand heralds, he says, proclaim it to the listening air; a thousand ministers and messengers betray it to the eye; tone, act, attitude, and look; the signals upon the countenance, the electric telegraph of touch,—all these betray the yielding citadel before the word itself is uttered, which, like the key surrendered, opens every avenue and gate of entrance, and makes retreat impossible.

When he commissioned Sancho to take note of and report upon the demeanour of Dulcinea, Don Quixote straitly enjoined his squire to mark whether she changed colour while he delivered his embassy, or betrayed agitation on hearing the knight's name; whether she repeated her answer three or four times, and changed it from soft to severe, from severe to soft again; whether she raised her hand to adjust her hair, though not disordered—'in short, observe all her actions and motions; for by an accurate detail of them I shall be enabled to penetrate into the secret recesses of her heart; for let me tell thee, Sancho, if thou knowest it not already, that with lovers the external actions and gestures are couriers, which bear authentic tidings of what is passing in the interior of the soul.' Miss Blandford, in *Speed the Plough*, is quite certain that Henry is not in love with her, because when he touched her hand, he trembled as if she terrified him; and instead of looking at her fixedly and fondly, he, when their eyes met, withdrew his, and cast them on the ground. Miss Tucker assures Florentine, in regard of Sir Clarence Norman in *Time works Wonders*, 'The man doats upon you: I know it; for when he talks about you, he looks so sweetly stupid.' Miss Gresham, in *Doctor Thorne*, is proved to be not in love with Mr. Moffat by the fact that she had by no means resolved within her heart that, of all the men she had ever seen or ever could see, he was far away the nicest and best; that she had no longing to sit near to him—the nearer the better; that she had no thought of his taste and his choice when she bought her ribbons and bonnets; that she had no indescribable desire for all her female friends to be ever talking to her about him; that when she wrote to him, she did not copy her letters again and again, so that she might be, as it were, ever speaking to him; and that she took no special pride in herself because he had chosen her to be his life's partner. Walter Savage Landor lays down the law concisely:

> '"I'm half in love," he who with smiles hath said,
> In love will never be;
> Whoe'er "I'm not in love," and shakes his head,
> In love too sure is he.'

The saying is at once memorable and disputed, 'If thou stoodest on a precipice with thy mistress, hast thou ever felt the desire to

plunge with her into the abyss? If so, thou hast loved!' The corollary is—if not, not. This sort of arrangement of 'ifs' and 'if nots' is a favourite formula with the authorities. She that had a name among the poets before she married Mr. Browning, and that made still more of her new name, enforces these among other conditions:

'Unless you can think, when the song is done,
No other is soft in rhythm;
Unless you can feel, when left by one,
That all men beside go with him;
Unless you can know, when unpraised by his breath,
That your beauty itself wants proving;
Unless you can swear, "For life, for death,"
O, fear to call it loving!
Unless you can muse in a crowd all day
On the absent face that fix'd you;
Unless you can love, as the angels may,
With the breadth of heaven betwixt you;
Unless you can dream that his faith is fast,
Through behoving and unbehoving;
Unless you can *die* when the dream is past—
O, never call it loving!'

The Countess of Albini, in Joanna Baillie's *Basil*, laughs away, by a negative test, the alleged passion of Count Rosinberg. Basil has been asserting that they most of lovers' ills complain who but affect love as a courtly grace, while he who feels is silent; and the Count objects:

'But there you wrong me; I have felt it oft,
Oft has it made me sigh at ladies' feet,
Soft ditties sing, and dismal sonnets scrawl.
Albin. In all its strange effects, most worthy Rosinberg,
Has it e'er made thee in a corner sit,
Sad, lonely, moping sit, and hold thy tongue?
Ros. No, 'faith, it never has.
Albin. Ha, ha, ha, ha! then thou hast never loved.'

Byron's Giaour can and does protest that, if changing cheek and scorching vein, lips taught to writhe, but not complain; if bursting heart, and maddening brain, and daring deed, and vengeful steel, 'and all that I have felt and feel, betoken love, that love was mine, and shown by many a bitter sign.' So again in the case of his Corsair:

'Yes, it was love, if thoughts of tenderness,
Tried in temptation, strengthen'd by distress,
Unmoved by absence, firm in every clime,
And yet—O, more than all!—untired by time;
Which nor defeated hope nor baffled wile
Could render sullen were she near to smile,
Nor rage could fire, nor sickness free to vent
On her one murmur of his discontent;
Which still would meet with joy, with calmness part,
Lest that his look of grief should reach her heart;
Which naught removed, nor menaced to remove—
If there be love in mortals, this was love!'

The subject is formulated with affected precision in Archer's techism of Cherry, in Farquhar: 'What are the signs and tokens that passion?' 'A stealing look, a stammering tongue, words probable, designs impossible, and actions impracticable.' Of later te is that Miss Mason who had only one idea of the outer evidences of e master passion; a secret or unrequited affection which did not ake itself known by copious quotations of Percy Bysshe Shelley and E. L. was, in her mind, a very commonplace affair. To the same thor we owe the conviction of a baronet of being very far gone, as indeed as he can go, in love, *ex hoc signo*, or *his signis*—that he me down-stairs with his hair parted on the wrong side, and his face pale as the tablecloth; and that he not only, negatively speaking, uld eat no breakfast, but positively let his coffee go the wrong way.

The reminiscences of the English opium-eater include a record a gentle girl with whom he asserts himself to have been, while ite a child, most absolutely and in the most chivalrous sense, in 'e. And the proof that he was so showed itself in three separate ides: he kissed her glove on any rare occasion when he found it ng on a table; he looked out for some excuse to be jealous of ; and he did his very best to get up a quarrel. What he wanted quarrel for was the luxury of a reconciliation; a hill cannot be l, he reminds us, without going to the expense of a valley.

The poet of the *Angel in the House*, comprising, too, within the eep of his wings, and within the range of his song, such themes l titles as *Faithful for Ever* and the *Victories of Love*, is natur- and—æsthetically speaking—artfully a *magister sententiarum* on outward and visible signs of love's inward and spiritual grace. the canto entitled 'Ætna and the Moon,' for instance:

'If signs suffice, let these avail:
Your name pronounced brings to my heart
A feeling like the violet's breath,
Which does so much of heaven impart,
It makes me yearn with tears for death;
The winds that in the garden toss
The guelder-roses give me pain,
Alarm me with the dread of loss,
Exhaust me with the dream of gain;
I'm troubled by the clouds that move,
Thrill'd by the breath which I respire,
And ever, like a torch, my love,
Thus agitated, flames the higher.
All's hard that has not you for goal;
I scarce can move my hand to write,
For love engages all my soul,
And leaves the body void of might.
The wings of will spread idly, as do
The bird's that in a vacuum lies;
My breast, asleep with dreams of you,
Forgets to breathe, and bursts in sighs.'

In another canto the analyst draws his conclusion from little signs, like little stars, whose faint impression on the sense the very looking straight at mars, or only seen by confluence; 'from chance unconscious, and from what concealment, over-conscious, showed.' Frederick Graham, again, is bold to affirm that he has had 'the disease, and gravely, if the signs are these:

> 'As, ere the spring has any power,
> The almond-branch all turns to flower,
> Though not a leaf is out, so she
> The bloom of life provoked in me;'

making him who, till then, had been hard and selfish, now all 'sanctity and service;' so that to him life had become joy in being wholly good and right, as she was. Tender he became towards the lower creatures, weak towards the weak, sparing the blackbird's nest and the gadding butterfly. Now, to him, the lark had reason for his song; and darkness spelt her name with stars that throbbed 'in anagram innumerous;' and 'twas the sad summit of delight to wake and weep for her at night:

> 'The heart would come into my throat
> At rosebuds. Howsoe'er remote,
> In opposition or consent,
> Each thing, or person, or event,
> Or seeming neutral howsoe'er,
> All, in the live electric air,
> Awoke, took aspect, and confess'd
> In her a centre of unrest;
> Yea, stocks and stones within me bred
> Anxieties of joy and dread.'

FRANCIS JACOX, M.A.

SOMETHING LIKE A TWELFTH-NIGHT CHARACTER

'SIXTH of January—Twelfth-night, is it?' said Mr. Robert Kennedy to his friend Mr. Charles Crackshot, as they were taking their ease, in as snug a little country hostel as one would wish to find, after a stiffish day's campaign with the snipe, in the pleasant county of Hants. 'Whisky-punch, ashen fagots, motley characters, fine old English customs, and all that sort of thing. Suppose we have some—I mean the punch.'

The proposition was one which Mr. Crackshot did not care to controvert. It was, he said, a thoroughly orthodox and seasonable beverage; and the sooner they had it the better, as he (Mr. Crackshot) was fatigued, and did not feel at all like sitting up into the small hours. The landlord of the Kennedy Arms (Mr. Kennedy's family had long been considerable proprietors in that part of Hampshire), formerly in the private service of the late lamented Mr. Gridling, Mr. Kennedy's uncle, was no mean hand at a hot brew. Having manufactured the punch to the best of his ability, he brought in the china bowl, deposited it on the table, and was about respectfully to retire, when Mr. Kennedy suggested that he should taste a glass of the compound that he had himself so cunningly devised.

'My respects to you, sir,' said the landlord of the Kennedy Arms; and he made an obeisance to both the gentlemen before him.

'And good luck to you, Spriggs, and Mrs. Spriggs too; and many happy years may you have in your house; and never again such a Twelfth-night as that which you had—how long? Six years, isn't it, ago?'

'Six years exactly, sir. It was not pleasant at the time, sir; but I owe what I have now to it—that is, to your kindness, Mr. Robert.'

'A good fellow that,' said Mr. Kennedy meditatively, as the discreet Spriggs left the room; 'a good fellow, and a devilish useful one, I can tell you. And this is decent punch; and, on the whole, I am as comfortable as I wish to be.'

'How about that mysterious Twelfth-night six years ago—A.D. 1867 it must have been, Bob? What was it?' asked Mr. Crackshot, who had pulled himself together, and acquired sufficient energy to charge his pipe once more—and his glass.

'My dear Charlie,' was the reply, 'you will pardon me if I

tell you that you are the most inquisitive man I ever met. I don't say this in disparagement of your many excellent qualities; I simply mention it as a fact. I will back you to ask more questions in the course of ten minutes than I ever asked in my life. However, I don't mind answering you on this occasion, and I will tell you; only I shall have to bore you for about twenty minutes.'

Mr. Crackshot settled himself comfortably down, and said, 'Go ahead;' and Mr. Kennedy commenced his narrative.

'You see, six years ago matters did not stand exactly with me as they stand now. I was myself more or less dependent—well, we will say on circumstances. My uncle George had not yet *abiit ad plures;* and, not to put too fine a point upon it, the principle of *habeas corpus* was not observed so strictly in a certain class of law-suits as it is in this era of social and legislative reform. Candidly, I was down on my luck; and unless certain relatives exerted themselves, I clearly foresaw a disagreeable amount of personal notoriety, not altogether unconnected with the Insolvency Court, awaiting me in the immediate future. My uncle, Mr. Gridling, had disappointed me: he said *I* had disappointed *him*. Still I managed to preserve a fairish front, and consoled myself with the philosophical reflection that matters might have been much worse. I might have been residing by compulsion in the neighbourhood of Chancery-lane, or an exile across the sea; might have had to take up my quarters at Boulogne. I often think what a panic the alterations in the law of debtor and creditor must have excited, both in certain neighbourhoods on this side, and generally in the watering-places on the other side, of the Channel:

> 'It is passed: you may find it in Hansard;
> The Israelite maketh his moan;
> And the dirge of Bream's-buildings is answer'd
> By a wail of lament from Boulogne.

I had intended,' added Mr. Kennedy, 'to immortalise the subject in verse, but, save to the extent of these few lines of doggrel, I have not yet found the Muses propitious. However, as I have said, the prospect which I had to face was not a lively one: I was down and I was dull. Christmas and New-year greetings came to me as insults upon the head of injury. The course which I had adopted was not that most calculated to fortify the human spirit against the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. I declined all invitations to the country. I had eaten my Christmas dinner at the club. Ever dined at the club on Christmas-day? No: take my advice then, and don't. You go there, we will say, about 4.30, and find the hall-porter, who has gorged and drunk two hours previously to something more than repletion, asleep in his box. He wakes, more or less, at your inquiry for letters, and resents your appearance as an intrusion. As you cross the hall, *en route* for the

norning-room, you see two or three small page-boys, with very lushed faces, and a couple of waiters, talking and laughing in a nanner which argues neither sobriety nor intelligence. Of course, beyond the domestics, there is not a soul in the club. It is just possible that as you sit down to your dinner Mr. MacGrowler, who has quarrelled with his wife, and who is not tolerated by his family, takes the table at the farthest end of the room. Tepid soup, iced fish, lukewarm entrée; fuddled servants; shrieks of wild laughter from the subterranean regions of the still-room and kitchens; fires allowed to go out; sulkiness; discomfort generally—that is what dinner at the club on Christmas-day means.

'However, I survived the ordeal. It was two or three days after the New-year had come in that I had a letter from my respected uncle Gridling, dated from what he was pleased to call his country house in the Surrey hills, some twenty-five miles from Cheapside. Its contents formed an agreeable oasis amid the desert of, to speak euphemistically, "business communications," which lay two or three deep on my table. Why had I not come to him? Would I not come? Did I forget that I was his nearest relative? Surely this was not the season at which uncle and nephew should keep apart from each other. I had been foolish, but then I had been young. The errors of youth were pardonable, if they were not confirmed. And he had heard, with much satisfaction, of the manly efforts I had made to put myself right. That was all he wanted. Nothing could be better than the accounts which had reached him from Mr. —— (his solicitor) of my efforts at retrenchment and reform. For himself, each Christmas as it passed caused him sensibly to feel the fact that he was not so young as he had been. This was the kind of letter, and a pleasant surprise it was, as you may imagine. To cut a long story short, the epistle wound up with a request that I would come to Fairfield as soon as I could. He (my uncle) was alone, and was anxious to see me before the Christmas season had altogether passed away. On the morning of the sixth of January, the day which I had fixed to arrive at Fairfield, I received a document of an exceedingly disagreeable character. It intimated that, unless a certain sum of 75*l.* 9*s.* 8½*d.* were paid by noon that day, the law must take its course, and my person must satisfy a claim for which my purse was unequal. Messrs. Moss and Mofuz of Jermyn-street were, I knew, men of their word, but I was in too good spirits to think much of the threat. Besides, before the shades of evening fell I knew I should be twenty-five miles removed from their clutch, and in a position not impossibly of comparative solvency. As I got into the train at Charing-cross, I certainly did observe an exceedingly suspicious-looking individual, who had watched me get out of the cab, bestow upon me a glance which seemed to indicate that he took a personal interest in my

physiognomy and my welfare. But I thought no more of the circumstance, and as I sat down to lunch at Fairfield, exactly two hours after I had left my own chambers, I felt fairly master of the situation, and completely happy.

'Cordiality and affection characterised my reception by my uncle. And as the day wore on, there was, I found, something more than his manner with which I had reason to be pleased. The only other guest was Mr. ——, his solicitor, of whose friendship and good services I was assured. Mr. Gridling was fond of his siesta after lunch, and Mr. —— and myself took a stroll.

"As your uncle's professional adviser, Mr. Kennedy, I am not at liberty to be explicit to you; but this I may say, that there is at least reason why I should congratulate you. It is more agreeable to me than you may suppose to be able to inform you that the impression which once existed in his mind as regards your habits and tastes has been effectually dissipated. As an earnest of his intentions, I should not wonder if you were to find on your dressing-table this evening something that may not be unacceptable as a New-year's present. There is one thing I would warn you. That at the present moment there may be claims upon you, to an amount in excess of what you can conveniently liquidate, I am well aware. I think it will be imprudent, however, to insist too much upon this in any conversation which you may have with your uncle. Your best plan will be on my return to London to call on me in Gray's-inn, and I will see what can be done. It would be a thousand pities that your chances—and I tell you, Mr. Kennedy, they are bright ones—with your uncle should be injured, possibly lost, in consequence of any financial effects of which the causes are no longer in existence. Mr. Gridling has the idea that you have touched *terra firma*. I am not acquainted sufficiently with your affairs to feel it my duty, or indeed within my power, to inform him otherwise."

'If Mr. —— had not been a lawyer, he ought to have been a Jesuit. A pleasant surprise on my dressing-table; my chances more than bright! Certainly my star was in the ascendant; and as for Moss and Mofuz, they might go hang. Why, I should probably be able to settle their claim myself to-morrow. It was getting dusk, and we were turning our steps towards the house, I lingering on the gravel walk outside a few minutes to finish a cigar. I heard the sound of a horse's hoof, and presently a man, riding up at a brisk trot, inquired whether I was "Kennedy Esquire." It was a letter sent by train, with instructions for "special and immediate delivery," from the man who superintended my chambers. The fellow had done me a really good turn. The note stated briefly that Messrs. Moss and Mofuz had been as good as their word—that the writ of *ca. sa.* was out; that the representatives of the sheriff of Middlesex had been at my chambers that day; and that it seemed they knew

my present whereabouts. He therefore thought it his duty to inform me as soon as possible of this. I don't think that in my life I ever felt more completely upset than by this brief epistle. Still I attempted to assume an air of indifference.

"This, I suppose," I said to the messenger, "came by the 3.40. Do you know whether any London passengers arrived by that train?"

"Two, sir," said the man, "and they wanted a fly to come to Fairfield. But as this was the only 'oss that Mr. Meadows had in, they couldn't have it till I returned. They did say, sir, as how they would take the letter to you themselves; but the station-master, he didn't know them, and he wouldn't hear of it; and curious customers they look, sir."

"My good fellow," I replied, "if that is the case, ride as slowly as you can to Stagford"—the station some four miles distant—"and here's half a sovereign for you."

'There was no doubt who the two passengers from London were. A pretty dilemma, in truth, I was in. I had probably about an hour yet before me, and at the expiration of that time, so far as I could see, I must be inevitably arrested, and that in my uncle's house, and taken back to London to spend my Twelfth-night in the charming vicinity of Cursitor-street. I walked into the passage, and upstairs into my room. There Spriggs was unpacking my portmanteau.

"Very glad to see you here, sir, again," was his greeting, "and to know that all is right between master and yourself. And master said I was to come to his study in a couple of hours, as he wanted to send to you or see you—I forget which, sir."

'In a couple of hours! Why, in that time I should be—Heaven only knew where. I suppose my countenance betrayed signs of distress, for Spriggs asked me whether I was unwell.

"The truth is, my good Spriggs," I said, "I am in the deuce of a mess;" and plunging *in medias res*, I told him the whole complication.

'Spriggs listened attentively, and gave me his opinion that matters were very serious indeed. Would it be impossible, he asked, to "square" these emissaries of the law, or at least to induce them to wait at Stagford till next morning? Quite, I told him. It was not a quarter to five, and at best there were only twenty minutes to spare. It is no exaggeration to say that on the tactics which I adopted in that brief interval entirely depended my future chances, so far as my uncle's will was concerned. Anything like an arrest for debt, and that under his own rooftree, Spriggs agreed with me in thinking that Mr. Gridling would not tolerate for a moment, and would effectually ruin me with him. Spriggs meditated for some minutes, and at last he spoke.

"Mr. Kennedy," he said, "sir, you have always been a good friend to me. You say that, to the best of your belief, these bailiff

fellars don't know you by sight, sir, but that you fancy some one did watch you as you were leaving Charing-cross this morning. That was no doubt a man sent to identify you; some understrapper who would describe your appearance to the pair who have come to Stagford." (I wondered what was coming.) "Now, sir, you and I are about the same height, size, and figure; you shall lend me that light greatcoat which you wore this morning, sir, and for the next twenty-four hours I will be Robert Kennedy, Esq."

'I asked Spriggs to explain himself still farther.

"What I mean is this, sir. I will walk down the drive to the lodge gate, and wait till the fly with this lot comes. They will see me and stop. 'Mr. Kennedy,' they will say, 'we want a word with you;' and off we shall go to London. The mistake won't be found out till we are twenty-five miles off, and then there will be no more trains to-night. My belief, sir, is that the letter which you will receive from master in an hour's time will make you able to settle this little matter a good many times over the first thing to-morrow morning."

'It was a sufficiently startling proposal. I did not know what to say to it, but there was no time to hesitate. In five minutes I had accepted Spriggs's offer, and Spriggs had left me disguised as Bob Kennedy. For some little while I sat meditating matters. I took out my watch; it was twenty minutes past five. By this time Spriggs must have come up with my pursuers. I reflected again; again I took out my watch. It was now close on six, and by this time Spriggs must have been on the point of entering the railway carriage of the last train to town, unless, indeed, by some accident the stratagem had been discovered, and the officers of the Middlesex sheriff were again on their road to Fairfield. In the midst of these meditations I was interrupted by a knock at my door. My worthy uncle entered, with a letter in his hand.

"Robert," he said, "I did not know you were here, and had intended to leave this on your dressing-table. I told Spriggs to take it, but I can't find him. I suppose he has gone out. There, my boy, open it presently." And so saying, my uncle departed.

'The envelope contained a cheque for 500*l*.

'As for the confusion which Spriggs's unexpected absence created in my uncle's household, I will say nothing of it. We had a convivial evening enough, but I own I rather expected the door to open every moment, and some myrmidon of the law to lay his hand upon my shoulder, informing me that Spriggs had been arrested by mistake. Let me pass over this. By eight o'clock next morning I was at Stagford Junction—four miles nearer London than Stagford terminus. Before nine I was in London. At ten minutes past nine my uncle's cheque was cashed; and after that, swiftly as hansom could take me from the Strand to Chancery-lane, I was with Spriggs

mporary confinement in Cursitor-street. Strangely enough, ably had Spriggs filled his rôle, the mistake had not been d. I paid the sum, with expenses, and at eleven I was at once more. Spriggs contrived to explain his absence to s's satisfaction. Later in the day I went into business with my uncle's solicitor, and an arrangement was soon s arrived at. Since then I have been able to thank Spriggs bstantial manner he deserved. I set him up in this hotel ht recompense enough for the Twelfth-night character assumed in my interest.'

his a true story, Bob?' asked Mr. Crackshot, knocking the t of his pipe.

e every word of it,' was the reply. 'Ask Spriggs, if you

the landlord of the Kennedy Arms, who that moment en- see whether the two gentlemen required anything farther, l, in a few emphatic sentences, the narrative.

T. H. S. ESCOTT, M.A.

SHAKESPEARE'S GAMES

We do not mean his plays, but his diversions. How did the poet unbend his bow of Apollo? The only answer we can look for we must gather from his works. His mind being universal, nothing too high, nothing too mean, for its grasp, he draws images, tropes, reflections, illustrations, from all sources. That which is not mirrored in his writings, we may conclude did not exist in the man.

In the first place, we conclude that Shakespeare was not a card-player. His allusions to cards are very infrequent. He speaks of them, too, as a man to whom they are unfamiliar and indifferent. The passages in which he mentions cards are so few, that they may be quoted *in extenso:*

'A vengeance on your crafty withered hide; yet I have faced it with a card of ten.'* *Taming of the Shrew*, act ii. scene 1.

'Have I not the best cards for the game?' *King John*, v. 2.

'Here lies a cooling card.'* *Henry VI.* part 1, v. 3.

'She, Eros, has pack'd cards with Cæsar.' *Antony and Cleopatra*, iv. 12.

'As sure a card as ever won the set.' *Titus Andronicus*, v. 1.

Thus far we have no technical allusions, and nothing more than a man might write who simply knew that there were such things as cards. Twice he alludes to a favourite card game of his age:

'And left them [Henry VIII. &c.] at primero with the Duke of Suffolk.' *Henry VIII.*, act v. scene 1.

'I never prospered since I forswore myself at primero.' Falstaff, *Merry Wives*, iv. 5.

Primero—a game of the same family as piquet—trump, or ruff, the parent of whist—and gleek were the card games chiefly played in England during the age of Shakespeare. But in his youth the playing of cards, except at Christmas, was confined to the upper classes of society. John Heywood, the epigrammatist of Shakespeare's age, was accustomed, according to Camden, to say 'that few men played at cardes but at Christmasse, and then almost all, men and boyes.' It is quite evident that some such simple foolish game as 'noddy' or 'beggar my neighbour' would be the highest attainable flight to those who played cards 'but at Christmasse.' For this reason, and for no natural disinclination to games of chance, we must ascribe Shakespeare's ignorance of cards. For these are things that, if not acquired young, men rarely care to acquire in after life. Had he lived in our days, Shakespeare would have played whist.

Our Shakespeare is no dicer either. He mentions the pastime

* The sense of these passages is doubtful, and we should suspect corrupt readings.

e and there, but brings in none of the slang expressions familiar ramatists of a similar period. Dicing and card-playing, indeed, e not to full flood in England till the Stuarts came in, and with n a general change of manners and modes of feeling. Shakeare only saw the opening scenes of this new drama of national life. We find no indications that Shakespeare was a player at tables ur backgammon—or draughts. We are pretty certain that he was a chess-player. The sole reference we can find to chess is in *Tempest*, act v. scene 1. Ferdinand and Miranda are discovered he cell of Prospero playing at chess. Miranda says: 'Sweet l, you play me false.' Ferdinand replies: 'No, my dearest love, ould not for the world.'

No chess-player would have put into the mouths of other players h phrases. 'Playing false' at chess has ever been unknown; and riter conversant with the game would have had no difficulty in ling some pleasant technical allusion for the lovers.

Shakespeare seems to have known something of tennis, but does admire the game, which was somewhat of a modern French imtation. The travelled courtiers are called upon to put away he faith they have in tennis and tall stockings' (*Henry VIII.* i. scene 3). 'There falling out at tennis' (*Hamlet*, act ii. scene 1). he old ornament of his cheek hath already stuffed tennis balls' *uch Ado*, act. iii. scene 2). He goes somewhat deeply into the hnical terms of the game in his *Henry V.*, but he is rather driven that by the traditionary account of the origin of Henry's invasion. e Dauphin sends the young king, in answer to his claim to cer- dukedoms of France, a ton of treasure, which turns out to be— nis balls. Henry rejoins:

> 'When we have match'd our rackets to these balls,
> We will in France, by God's grace, play a set
> Shall strike his father's crown into the hazard.
> Tell him he hath made a match with such a wrangler,
> That all the courts of France will be disturb'd
> With chases.'

Football we should fancy to be too rough a game for gentle akespeare. A man who has brains hardly cares to be kicked and cked down for nothing. We have traced one allusion to the game *King Lear*. Kent, tripping up the heels of Oswald, cries, 'Nor ped neither, you base football-player.'

That he was a practised sportsman, our knowledge of the busy rossing nature of his career forbids us to believe; but he had a n appreciation of the pleasures of the chase. Witness these lines the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, hackneyed and yet ever fresh, ere he describes those hounds of Sparta:

> 'Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,
> Each under each. A cry more tuneable
> Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn.'

He must have loved, if not to follow the hounds, at least to watch their course from some familiar height; 'And mark the musical confusion of hounds and echo in conjunction.'

We doubt not but that Shakespeare was a good fisherman too. Why else should he set Cleopatra a-fishing when she is waiting for news from Antony? There are many allusions elsewhere to the angler that smack of knowledge of the gentle craft:

'She knew her distance, and did angle for me.' *All's well that ends well*, v. 3.
'Bait the hook well; this fish will bite.' *Much Ado about Nothing*, ii. 3.
'Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth.' *Hamlet*, ii. 1.
'Nor angle with this melancholy bait
For this fool gudgeon.' *Merchant of Venice*, i. 1.

But it is in bowls that we think we have found the favourite diversion of Shakespeare. There is a warmth and familiarity in his allusions that signify true love. Thus:

'A marvellous good neighbour, in sooth, and a very good bowler.' *Love's Labour lost*, v. 2.

'Well, forward, forward! thus the bowl should run, and not unluckily against the bias.' *Taming of the Shrew*, iv. 5.

'Sometimes, like to a bowl upon a subtle ground, I have tumbled past the throw.' *Coriolanus*, v. 2.

'Madam, we'll play at bowls. 'Twill make me think the world is full of rubs, and that my fortune runs against the bias.' *Richard II.* iii. 4.

'Trial did draw bias and thwart.' *Troilus and Cressida*, i. 3.

'When I kissed the jack, upon an upcast to be hit away!' *Cymbeline*, ii. 1.

We can picture to ourselves the trim bowling-green among the sunny meads of Warwickshire; the snug tavern adjoining, the portly host in his white apron, the elders of the community sunning themselves upon the benches placed around the sward, where a group of eager bowlers is assembled. Worthy Master Shakespeare poises the bowl, his eyes eagerly fixed upon the jack; a man with bright full eye, a ruddy cheek, a mouth curved with wit and good humour, a mien bright and *débonnaire*. All engrossed he is with the object of his aim, the little distant ball, cheek by jowl with which lies the portly bowl of his adversary, the way between environed with obstacles. Carefully he studies the bias of the bowl, the thwarting influence of the sloping ground. Forward, forward runs the bowl, amid encouraging and deprecating cries. He has reached the jack, has knocked the enemy away, and now his ball lies close beside the coveted goal. Perhaps he is prouder for the moment than when his *Hamlet* was successful at the Globe, or the fair vestal of the West stooped from her throne to do him homage.

Thus we can fancy his latter days to have glided away in his retirement, as he enjoyed with thorough heartiness his well-won holidays—penning a sonnet now and then, and making a little quiet love, no doubt, to the very end of the chapter. For he had broken his staff, and drowned his book 'deeper than did ever plummet sound.'

DEAD SORROW'S KIN

RS. C. READE, AUTHOR OF 'HER MASTER,' 'SWIFT AS A FLASH,' ETC.

CHAPTER I. FOR HER SOUL'S SCREEN.

N writing at a round table in a barely-furnished lodging-house
'-room.

a beautiful woman and not a beautiful room, though re-
from positive obtrusive hideousness by a piano, a genista in
m, two hyacinths—one pink, the other blue—and various or-
al odds and ends of a distinctly feminine order dotted about
round table, the mantelpiece, the marble-topped chiffonier,
tinctly feminine fashion.

l the woman who is not beautiful, what of her? As she sits
taring out at the pleasant May sunshine—May sunshine
l and prisoned in a shabby-genteel Pimlico street—of what
s her uncomeliness? Pertains it unto slovenly attire, gaunt
, old age?

Kate Hilyard is not old. Looking at her now with her
ned full to the light, so that every line about her mouth, on
head, is visible, you would not take her to be more than thirty
s six-and-twenty and a half, between ourselves—neither is
renly; her light-brown hair—quite brown, not a bit golden
rn or red—is smooth as glass, and twisted faultlessly about
tortoiseshell comb at the back of her head; her plain buff
dress, made in the simplest way, trimmed with the cheapest
s her perfectly; her plain white collar and cuffs and dark-
cktie are as fresh as if just put on; neither does she look
or. There is no ring on the broad firm-fleshed white hand
the pen, to be sure, and on the other only a wedding-ring
ommon thirty-shilling sapphire affair of the forget-me-not and
nent description; also she wears neither brooch nor earrings
ch, but still you could not accuse her of being exactly poverty-
ı. She is too clean and lady-like and well put together for that.
hen, comes it that she lacks fairness? Answer, my Kate.
your grave face, and let's see what is the matter with it.

! too long, not enough feeling about the chin; mouth in-
o a downward curve at the corners. Have you been often
nd heavy at heart, then, Mrs. Hilyard? Teeth, yes; the
re all very well, and so are the gold-coloured eyes,

> 'Fill'd with clear light, and fire, and large repose,
> Like a fair hound's;'

and the complexion, for a very white woman out of her teens, is not bad; but the nose is too straight, too severe. No, you are not a beauty by any means, madam; so you may get back to that indexing of yours as quickly as you like. After all, when a woman is married, you know, it doesn't much matter about her appearance; she has accomplished her destiny, poor creature; let her be therewith content.

Slowly, steadily creeps away the afternoon, with its chorus of milkmen and cats'-meat-men, and bawling costers and rumbling wheels. People knock at the front door, are let in and go away again; but Mrs. Hilyard does not look up from her tedious work. She knows nobody will take the trouble to call upon her; no child pops in his or her head to see how 'mother' is getting on. Calmly, uninterruptedly, efficiently she labours till five o'clock strikes somewhere in the neighbourhood. This invisible clock is of great value to her, the watchless one; and a pretty slight child of about fourteen brings in a tea-tray.

'I brought up a jug of boilin' water, 'm, in case Mr. 'Ilyard should be late,' remarks she, clearing a space on the round table for the tray.

'Thank you, Ada; that was wise,' replies Mrs. Hilyard in a quiet sober voice, restful as her eyes.

'You should 'ave gone for a walk this afternoon, 'm,' says Ada, searching in the chiffonier for the sugar. 'Mrs. Green let me take 'Arry and Tommy up into the Park, and O, it was splendid!' with enthusiasm.

'When there is work to be done it must be done,' answers Kate, yawning wearily, and pouring herself out a cup of tea; 'I shall go for a turn this evening.'

No engagements, no dining or dancing or play-seeing or music-hearing for her, then; and it is the season too—quite a practical hard-headed drudge of an unbeautiful woman, she. A second or so, and two staid middle-aged feet come pounding along the street, come pounding up the steps, a latch-key clicks feebly in the street-door.

'That's 'im!' exclaims Ada, upsetting the sugar-tongs into the slop-basin with a prodigious amount of jingle; 'I'll run down and get the pail out of 'is way, or 'e'll be sure to run against it.'

Can Mr. Bertram Hilyard be one of those unfortunate persons who do on all occasions incontinently trip themselves up over every obstacle small and great—obstacles, indeed, which luckier, less clumsy mortals would never so much as touch with the tip of a toe? Poor Bertram!

A bang as of the gates of Gaza on Samson, a scroop of dragged tin, and tramp, tramp come the feet up-stairs.

Mrs. Hilyard pours out a second cup of tea; her face betrays neither joy nor sorrow at her husband's return. She glances at a

of well-worn red-and-black slippers in the corner by the fire-
e, then she looks at the door; as she does so it opens, and her
meet his.

'Well,' she says, as he comes into the room, 'what sort of a
have you had?'

'Give me some tea, and I'll tell you; I'm raging with thirst.'
he drops heavily upon the sofa, which groans a hoarse remon-
nce, and forthwith kicks off his boots.

Kate brings him his tea.

'And now, if you could find me my slippers,' observes he, peer-
about beneath the table, under the green-rep armchair—anywhere,
ywhere except where those inelegant and boat-like articles of
ent chance to be. He has done this every night for the last five
s. Kate sets them before him. Then she puts his boots, not too
tantial or too new, outside the door, and then she says again:

'What sort of a day have you had?'

'Sit down here,' patting the sofa with a fat, short, white hand,
reof the nails are flat and bitten. He is not a handsome man,
Bertram Hilyard of ours, though he has a good broad fore-
l on which the brown hair grows well in soft curves, and nice little
eyes; and when he smiles, as he is smiling now, you can see
ty white teeth under his light moustache. His face is so devoid
nergy and courage and devotion, you could not fancy him a
, were he burning at the stake; neither could you believe him a
in, were he swinging on the gallows. But then there is some-
g in that. These men with no noses and no principles have
r privileges after all.

'Sit down here,' says then this not wholly unenviable gentle-
, 'and I'll tell you all about it.'

Kate sits down; she knows that if she does not so sit, much
plaining will ensue.

'I've got a man to take up the Society,' he pursues, and two
s of tea trickle slowly down his waistcoat; she watches them.
hen I reached the office this morning, I found a letter from one
m Brome,' dabbing at the drops with his handkerchief, 'saying
he was prepared to go into the concern if, on inspection, it
ed satisfactory; also, that he would call on me at twelve and
through the books, &c. I suppose there isn't any more tea?'

She gets up, replenishes his cup, and gives it back to him.

'And he came?'

'Yes; and what's more, he seemed perfectly satisfied with what
ld him, and is ready to pay down five hundred pounds for a half-
e directly he has seen his solicitor and had the proper agree-
ts made out.'

'Is he really?'

Mr. Hilyard singles out a hair from his right whisker and pulls

it dubiously. He cannot see Kate's face, she is standing with her back to him, looking out into the street.

'Well, and why not?' he says at length in a deprecatory tone, 'it's a very good business, and with this additional capital—'

She laughs, a not quite pleasant laugh if listened to carefully.

'I do my best to keep a decent roof over our heads, and you sneer at me,' exclaims he, much aggrieved.

'I wish a decent roof was compatible with common honesty,' she says, turning round and considering him with saddest eyes.

'There is nothing dishonest in making one's living—'

'By hard work, no!' with sudden vigour.

'You wouldn't like me to break stones or drive a cab?'

'I should like you to do something better than swindle fools!' This grimly, walking to the table, and gathering together the slips she has written this afternoon, a goodly pile.

Mr. Hilyard mutters something about temper, and being dog-tired, and having a desperately trying life of it; and therewith slowly conveys himself into their narrow bedroom, slamming the door behind him.

His irritation produces no visible effect upon Kate. She deals out her A's and B's and C's in little heaps as steadily as ever. Perhaps this is not the first time she has ventured to remark on the morality of her husband's position as orthodox believer of the High-Church variety and ecclesiastical agent, as man of honour, and deviser of schemes rotten at the core and ruinous to all who meddle with them; perhaps she has heard before now how that it is a matter of no small difficulty for that same husband to find her bare bread and cheese; perhaps she stares Poverty and Lies hard in the eyes every morning when she wakes from the sleep she loves—sleep is the sole luxury of poor men and women; perhaps Poverty and Lies distort and render hideous every dream. Alack! the feeble puling of a feeble fatalist means little to a soul in such a case as this.

In a few minutes Mr. Hilyard reappears, soothed and invigorated by the liberal application of soap and water and a pair of ivory-backed brushes, the produce of the first guinea Kate earned by the exercise of her small literary talents—some four years ago now. She is not altogether a bad wife, mind you; being scrupulously truthful, seldom discontented out loud, economical *à merveille*, a lady to the minutest fibre of her nature, by no means deficient in brains, and if not madly devoted, still civil and decently affectionate as a rule.

Agreeably struck by her diligence, and likewise tickled in his artistic sense of fitness—he is a poet in a small way—by the pose of her spare *leste* figure and smooth brown head, Bertram comes to her side, and putting his arm round her waist, stoops down and gives her a cool marital kiss on the cheek.

n't be cross, dear,' he says; 'because the Baba's a gentle
d does try all he can to please you.'
', when a sane Christian of eight-and-thirty begins talking
mself as a 'Baba' and 'a gentle soul,' there seems very little
ne with him.
. Hilyard has long ago recognised the validity of this truth;
ires meekly.
ve you been very dull all day, pet?' asks he, still with his
ut her waist, unaware apparently that he is considerably in
These stolid ponderous gentlemen seldom are aware of
; except the inspiration of the Bible, the necessity of union
Church and State, the impeccability of the British aristo-
e holiness of capital punishment, and the pleasure of eating
king too much on every possible occasion.
,' she says, scouring the table with her eyes fort he heap of
ot more than usual. Would you mind moving a little?'
im off with her elbow. It is rather warm for protracted
s.
emoves his arm and retires to the hearthrug.
u see,' he remarks, after a pause, during which he and his
have taken sweet counsel together with fine effect, 'if this
s come up to the scratch, it'll give us a little money to go
th; you won't be so mewed up then.'
ertainly should not dream of going about with his money,'
he calmly; 'neither would you, I should hope. Every far-
hat ought to be spent in bolstering up this precious agency,
g to make it pay.'
o hundred pounds would do that, properly utilised. I don't
let a chance slip through my fingers when I get it, you may
ure;' vaguely. 'I've dined too often on sausage-rolls lately

r creature!' sighs Kate; 'it would be better if we were
d. We are no good in this world, either to each other, or
ves, or to anybody else, that I can see.'
nsense! Rome wasn't built in a day. You oughtn't to
so; I gave up the school to please you.'
, I know,' says she quite quietly. 'Where have those
to?'
Hilyard stands still and looks at her. She is very pale—
her; and once she presses her hand to her forehead as if
her.
ne,' he says presently, 'you've done enough work for once,
. Go and get on your hat, and let me take you for a walk.'
always so: a walk, a new pair of gloves, a bottle of Gil-
rry or Spiers and Pond's claret, a two-shilling treat to the
s spiritual tonic; and she wants the free breath of heaven,

she wants greatness, luxury, the power of doing good—for she has large thoughts, this unbeautiful white-visaged wife of an unattached schoolmaster. Man's love she believes she can live without to the end of her days; she fancies the loving fibre of her nature withered months before she put on her wedding-ring—withered, being torn and wrung past healing by one gay and gallant person whom, strange to say, she met only two days ago in the Buckingham Palace-road, and found to be merely a well-dressed, rather sickly-looking gentleman, with an obviously dyed moustache and a pronounced bend in his back, and a somewhat flamboyant manner of staring at girls—in no wise a being calculated to inspire an undying passion even in the bosom of a simpleton of seventeen. *Eheu fugaces.* We wiseacres pay dearly for our wisdom.

Revenons. In reply to her husband's invitation, she gets up obediently—it is natural to her to do as he wishes—and goes away to put on the sober black-lace cheeseplate and black-merino cape which form the sum-total of her out-of-doors raiment. Bertram has no money to give her for finery; she buys her own clothes with her earnings—earnings made by indexing and writing short stories for magazines, and contributing domestic articles to hole-and-corner publications of ephemeral existence; but though she is so shabby—though her gloves have been twice cleaned, and her veil worn six weeks—she still looks nice, looks quite lady-like and presentable. 'If I were a sloven, with my petticoats half an inch thick in mud, and my hair down my back, and my tie under my left ear, he would buy me some new things directly; but because I don't quite disgrace him, because I sew and darn and keep myself decent, he never buys me anything; that is the way of them!' thinks she a little bitterly, when Mr. Hilyard informs her, for the benefit of Ada, as she comes in to take away the tea-things, that she is looking 'as sweet as she can look.'

Now the streets and squares and terraces about Bellingham-street are, as all the world knows, aristocratic in their affinities. The coster's moke brayeth not in their stately shade, neither doth the coster yell. A brass band occasionally rouses the dormant echoes, but its tune is as irreproachable as the morals of the matrons reigning over those lordly mansions whence it seeks patronage, and its time rigorous as their performance of their maternal duties. This band is playing a pretty waltz as Mr. and Mrs. Hilyard, having purchased half a pound of cooked ham for their suppers, stroll slowly down one side of Eccleston-square, just about the time people who are bound for the theatre begin to think of hunting-up the opera-glasses and going up-stairs to put on their cloaks and a final dab or two of pearl-powder; and the gay rhythm, the bright flowers in the windows, the striped awnings shading more than one door, with their delicate suggestions of mirth and careless enjoyment, and all the

. things riches can get and give, the pleasant sense of summer he air, fill Kate's empty heart with so sudden, so fiery a joy, tangible, evanescent as the blue flare of spirit flung on a fire,— she slips her hand through Bertram's arm, and hugs it close ır for sheer delight.

Just then a brougham overtakes them, passes them, and pulls t a door about two hundred yards farther on.

The blue flare dies away. To be happy is an acquired power; ı is so seldom happy that she finds it hard to be happy long.

The waltz comes to an end, and the door of the house where ›rougham is standing opens.

Two ladies in red opera-cloaks and fluffy hoods come out; a man in evening dress and a loose gray overcoat, with a leathern of opera-glasses in his hand, follows them; rather a distinhed-looking man, not young, not old, with curious acute black rows, and bright dark eyes, and square whiskerless jaws, and a -shaped unmoustached mouth. Kate feels her husband's pace ten; she looks round at him; he is looking at this shaven man ıat sort of abashed shy way common to children of both sexes slight acquaintances.

The two hoods lower themselves, disappear for a moment or so, to up again at the brougham's front window, which is open. The shoulders eclipse them; a large white hand turns the handle ıe door, some one says, 'Vaudeville!' and they drive away.

'What makes you stare so?' asks Mrs. Hilyard, as her lord ts himself round to gaze after the departing carriage.

'Why, that man was Brome!'

'Adam Brome, your new pigeon?' says she, smiling curiously. This is a woman who never for a second weakens her mental n by the interposition of any veil of conventional hypocrisy, ›ver thin. Bertram maintains a dignified silence. Kate laughs.

'There is no need to be rude,' observes he grandly.

'Not the least in the world; but you know I never can see the ness of calling things by their right names. And so that was Brome?' in a tone of some little interest.

'It was.'

'How old do you think he is?' picking her way carefully ıs the watered street. A frilled petticoat lasts her a week.

'I don't know. I didn't ask him.'

'No, exactly!' and again that odd smile. 'I suppose he be well off to have friends in Eccleston-square.'

'I fancy he has some money.'

'And yet he turns ecclesiastical agent!'—as if human folly no farther go.

Mr. Hilyard holds his peace. Perhaps he is thinking that it l be certainly unwise of him to enter upon that most delectable

line of life had he none,—were he, for instance, a penniless bachelor-of-arts and second-class man, for some time head-master of Tew grammar-school, situate not a thousand miles from the quiet town of Buckingham, with a stipend of three hundred pounds a year; now backer of bills, promoter of limited-liability companies, seller of advowsons, exchanger of livings, doer of anything—everything not actually indictable as an offence against public morality, whereby breath may be kept in his wife's body and his own.

'Sometimes,' begins Kate thoughtfully after a while, 'I think it would be better to give up all pretence to gentility; to take a room somewhere—or perhaps a couple of rooms,'—solitude is very dear to her, she can be almost happy by herself, with a pen and an inkpot and plenty of foolscap,—'unfurnished rooms, you know, at about five shillings a week; I could clean them, and cook and wash; or'—and this plan seems the pleasantest of the two—'you can get a very nice cottage in the country for two or three pounds a quarter. Why not—'

'My dear,' interposes Bertram mildly, 'you talk nonsense. When you had a good house and every comfort in the country, you couldn't endure it. How do you suppose you could put up with the wretchedness of a labourer's hovel?'

'I couldn't endure being in a false position; I couldn't endure living among a parcel of people who hadn't one thought in common with me; who believed that I believed what they believed, when I didn't. It was acting a lie from year's end to year's end. One had better die in a gutter than be a hypocrite!' intensely.

'You have such romantic notions about things,' rejoins he coolly. 'It doesn't in the least matter about a person's private opinions, so long as they do their duty.'

'And eat and drink and sleep and pay their bills!' with some bitterness. 'No; I daresay not, to most people at least. For my part I would rather perish miserably than lead such a life.'

'Perishing miserably sounds better than it feels, I should imagine,' says he, preparing for a sneeze.

'You can't be going to have hay-fever now!' exclaims Kate with lively horror.

'Can't say, I'm sure,' slowly recovering; 'you never can tell when it's going to come on;' and a loud solo on the nose.

Mrs. Hilyard sighs. Divers and sundry are the lesser evils of her daily life, but of these hay-fever is the chief.

'That is one argument against my country plan, certainly,' she says, when peace is restored.

'Rather,' is the deliberate rejoinder; 'besides, it's the wildest dream. No; you must be patient, and make yourself as contented as you can until we fall on better days. I'm sure no poor devil ever worked harder than I do.'

But you work all wrong!' exclaims she vehemently. 'Don't
ee that for a man who believes in church theology, and all the
of it, to make his living by selling souls to one man, and buy-
iem of another, is dreadful—is the most horribly blasphemous
he can do?'

If I didn't do it, somebody else would.'

Granted: but then somebody else might be a mere tradesman;
man who would if he could earn a livelihood by spreading and
cing the doctrines he himself makes a mock of. Of course I
ot a sufferer,' rather scornfully; 'all the solemn humbug and
ntional hypocrisy in the world cannot make a jot or a tittle of
ence to me; but that doesn't prevent my seeing the right and
of the thing.'

I see that we must pay our rent and have food to eat,' replies
ggedly.

'ou may pour words fiery as boiling lead into this man's ears,
he will not wince; his mental cuticle is tough as his body is
r.

If he ill-treated me, boxed my ears, swore at me, stayed out
ght, did anything but always pull his whiskers and stare and
, I think I shouldn't get so cross,' Kate has thought oftener
she should, perhaps.

Ah,' groans she now, 'how vile it is to be poor!'

Of course it is; and yet you fly at me for trying to make a
l coup, and so cut a way through our miseries.'

I don't fly at you,' ever so wearily; 'I only say, be honest.'

There are degrees of honesty,' replies this casuistic gentleman.
man who lets his honesty starve his wife is an idiot.'

But we needn't starve if you were to do as I wish; you can
s get a tutorship, and my writing does bring in a little. And,
would be so much better than this terrible trifling with truth
ionour!' most earnestly.

But Mr. Hilyard shakes his head.

You wouldn't stand it for one hour!' says he gravely. 'It's
ery well to read Emerson and Carlyle and Matthew Arnold and
Ruskin in the morning, and preach renunciation and self-denial
ieroism in the evening; but,' and he smiles cheerfully, 'when
nes to practising it all day long for months and weeks—that's
y different story.'

Your scepticism is more profound than mine,' says she sadly;
disbelieve in the possibility of good.'

The world's enough to make one do so.'

The world!' she echoes. 'I thought Christians renounced the
l before they could speak. What has a believer in Christianity
with the world?' and her voice waxes somewhat ironic.

You are a good hand at sneering,' retorts Bertram tartly. 'Y

don't know what's come over you to-night. I fancied you'd be in a good temper too when I brought you home such good news,' he goes on plaintively.

'I don't call it good news.'

'Ah, that's where it is,' sucking in his breath; 'you won't look at things as they are. You won't understand how necessary it is that something should be done. Why, this five hundred pounds will be a complete godsend!'

'I only hope the man won't lose it.'

'Well, he must take his chance of that, like everybody else who makes an investment; but I shall do my utmost to prevent anything of the sort, for my own sake.'

'Ah, yes,' and she smiles a little, 'I forgot he had that security!'

Then they turn round and walk slowly home, almost in silence—thinking, considering, devising—together, but alone.

Back in the little drawing-room, work again pins Mrs. Hilyard to her chair. That index on which she is employed must be finished to-night, so as to be delivered at the printing-office by ten o'clock to-morrow morning. This week's rent will be settled out of the three guineas she is to be paid for it. Eleven—twelve; Bertram is in bed, you can hear him breathing hard through the half-open folding-doors. Still she labours on, nay it is nearly one when she pastes the last Z on the sheet of paper before her, and with a great yawn and stretch, for she is very tired, blows out one candle, takes the other, and joins him.

He blinks at the light and turns over. She takes the comb out of her hair: it tumbles down behind in one long thick tail some way below her waist.

'Tell me your man's name,' she says suddenly, facing round towards him brush in hand. In this dim light you might easily mistake her for a pretty woman.

'Eh,' gutturally, 'what?'

'I want to know the name of this new man of yours,' she repeats deliberately.

'Brome!' grunts Mr. Hilyard; 'Adam Brome! I thought I told you.'

'Yes, but I had forgotten. Adam Brome!' looking at herself in the glass with great meditative eyes. 'Adam Brome! why, Adam de Brome founded Oriel College, didn't he?'

But her laudable desire for accurate historic information is, alas, doomed to cold neglect—her husband is asleep.

Chapter II.

WASTE CARE.

'Shall I tell you what I have been thinking?'

'Well!'

'We ought to ask Brome to dinner some night.'

It is just a week since Mr. Hilyard brought home that piece of l news which Kate received so ungraciously, and matters have ured quickly during this interval; so quickly indeed, that the esiastical agency now boasts two recognised chiefs, and a certain thy gentleman possesses a partner in everything, according to yearnings of his soul. 'Plenty of money, capital address, heaps nergy, sees what ought to be done in a twinkling, and does it at ». Ha! We shall have all the business in London in our office re the year's out, if we go on as we've begun,' said he only erday; and he believes it.

This brisk advance on success, combined with a couple of vic- ous skirmishes with the British cleric, have produced no small unt of exhilaration in the bosom of our Bertram; you can see it kling in his little eyes, and glistening on his moustache, and bling down his waistcoat, as he sits there gazing at the skeleton dried haddock, and fortifying his exhausted nature with tea and and buttered French roll, on this blithe May morning; you can it gurgling and bubbling in his voice as he states that convic- of his, anent the propriety of asking 'Brome to dinner some t.'

And Kate, she is exhilarated too of course; she has got over all e ridiculous scruples of hers about justice and honour and in- ity and such-like nonsense; she has taken her watch and her ches and earrings and lockets out of pawn, and broken out in iart new costume and a fine plaited chignon, money being plen- —of course she has, and looks all the better for it too, I say.

What! She is still wearing the plain buff batiste, still wearing own hair, still broochless, watchless, fandangleless! The poor sentimental fool! The impudent idiot! Tell me no more about such folly makes me sick.

'You don't say anything,' continues Mr. Hilyard after a some- lengthy pause, occupied by him in looking through the *Times* lement; 'don't you like the idea?'

'The idea!' echoes Kate dreamily, withdrawing her eyes from opposite houses. 'What idea?'

'Of asking Brome to dinner. Another cup of tea, please.'

'If you think he had better be asked, ask him.'

It does not signify to her whether he comes or stays away. He

is only one of the two or three dozen men whom her husband knows and talks about, and now and then dines with, the majority of whom, indeed, she has never even seen save in photographs.

'The question is, would he be intensely bored?' remarks that gentleman, producing a gold toothpick from a well-worn waistcoat-pocket.

Kate crunches up her last morsel of toast and pushes back her chair. That toothpick causes her no small amount of personal discomfort. It has of late enjoyed the privilege of avuncular guardianship, but yesterday, in common with various other articles of luxury pertaining unto its owner, quitted that wide-extended rule.

'Not that I mean to be rude,' adds he deprecatorily, scraping away with the aplomb and dexterity acquired only by long practice. 'I don't suppose he would be more bored here than anywhere else in ladies' society.'

'Doesn't he like women, then?' inquires Kate indifferently, taking Bertram's hat off the sofa and beginning to brush it. She is scrupulously exact in the performance of these small domestic offices, darning his socks, mending his shirts, laying out his clothes, when he plays Clodius to some rich man's Diomed, doing her best to render him such service as she can at all times and seasons, seeing that she does not love him, has never loved him, and yet eats his food, and drinks his drink, and shares his home.

'I shouldn't say so,' replies Bertram, taking a final look at an advertisement inviting any gentleman of position to double his income by becoming agent for a new and splendid scientific discovery, warranted, if pushed, to realise magnificent returns; address D.O.G., 5003 Swindlehall-street. 'Too hard-headed.'

'Still the very loftiest souls do occasionally descend to lesser things,' smiles Kate, going to work on a dusty black coat.

'Ye-es,' evolving a stumpy pencil and an old envelope from the interior recesses of his garments to write down the above address; 'ye-es! It's a pity you aren't friends with the people at Clapham, because then we might have—5003—might have asked Alicia to meet him; a lively sort of a girl like her makes an evening go off so well.'

'The people at Clapham' happen to be Mr. Hilyard's father and mother and sisters.

'You can ask Alicia if you like. I have no wish to deprive Mr. Brome of the pleasure of her society,' says Kate calmly, ascertaining the working capacity of a button. 'She might possibly induce him to marry her in due course of time;' not quite as if such an event were highly probable.

'She might,' replies Bertram, getting up and going to the door for his boots; 'but I don't think we'll give her the chance just yet. The table's almost too small for four.'

Kate is silent. There is just the faintest flush upon her face; has her wrongs, and the thought of those 'people at Clapham' ot calculated to make her forget them.

'It is as you like,' she says presently, however; 'only tell me it day you mean to ask him for, because I must let Mrs. Green w.'

'Well, let me see; to-day's Friday—suppose I say to-morrow. I know we needn't have anything out of the way—just a bit of non, and a duck and a few peas, and a gooseberry tart. I suppe she can cook that?'

'Yes, I should think so,' helping him on with his coat; 'but n't that cost a great deal of money?'

She is accustomed to dine herself for less than sixpence every of her life; to spend much on food, on clothes, on pleasure goes inst her, the niggard!

'There are so many poor wretches in this world who would knock 's brains out for a crust of bread,' adds she meditatively.

'Granted,' responds Bertram, gazing at himself in the fly-spotted s. 'You can't ask a man to dinner and give him garbage. If does do a thing, let it be done well. We don't often go such a ker.'

'No,' answers Kate, considering him with her thoughtful eyes; don't, I'm glad to say. It always seems to me the height of shness to spend money on sensual enjoyment.'

'That's as it may be. I know I wish I didn't look quite so us. This London's a filthy hole after all. Well, good-bye, !' and Mr. Hilyard turns himself about and takes up his hat and es. 'I'll ask him for to-morrow night at seven. You know quite a gentleman, and has seen a lot of the world, so you won't him hard to get on with; and if you want a new dress—'

But Kate shakes her head. Her old gray silk is shabby, very ne of the sleeves has been darned, and there is a grease-mark ig as a halfcrown on the front breadth—it has been her best s for the last two years; nevertheless, old-fashioned, well-worn t is, it is better far, more wholesome, freer from the taint of disesty pervading her world than could be the smartest costume in London, for she bought it with money earned by genuine hard k well done. The poor old gown! And she regards it tenderly, so much as the product of looms and the result of dressmaking sors, as the witness of things unseen. Fair fancies cling about brain children nestle in its bosom—the poor old gown! She wear it at feast and festival, be king or kaiser seated at the d, till genuine hard work well done shall yield her another. If good enough for her, it is good enough for the whole world.

So Bertram Hilyard kisses his 'pet,' and goes.

Now, to a woman who has no friends, no acquaintances, whom

she takes up her pen this morning and tries to get b
land she quitted so lothly late last night, finds that, tur
she will, a great man in a gray overcoat with opera-g
hand, a great man, whose habitual diet is salmon and d
and gooseberry-tart, is always before her, marring he
spective, playing harlequin with her hero and heroine,
her frantic with irritation at the futility of her endeavou
from his persecutions.

No, Mrs. Hilyard, it won't do! You may walk u
the room till you walk the heels off your slippers if you
Combe Mattock will be just as far away as it is now; y
over your story twenty thousand times, and it will seem
as meaningless, the merest idiot's jargon, all noise and
consequent nonsense. Give it up, my dear; you've
enough for the last fortnight to deserve one forenoon's hol
and you know you have still got that sovereign which
Tyburnia sent you for your last story in your purse.
able you to make yourself decent to see this— Bless m
again! What! is the universe but one magnified Ad
Go and practise, for heaven's sake, and drive the wrete
out of your head at the end of a chromatic scale.

Kate puts away her writing, and sits down to the p
same piano is a rare and valued friend of hers. When re
first stood face to face, music was the charm whereby
cajole the grim monster into friendliness. In plainer E
the cousin who had educated and brought her up from
years old—her mother dying about that time, and her
too young and reckless a man to be trusted with the

free. And so she did front the world, and was in a fair way of winning fame and fortune, being an honest worker and a clever girl, when a woman's sickness came upon her, the sickness of a fevered soul, and little by little the fair dream faded away into a blackness, whence issued presently a crowd of cold strange faces—faces whereon she had never looked before—and in their midst Bertram's; and to the rear, debt and loneliness and want driving her fiercely into his outstretched arms, and— You admire Schubert, you have heard Mr. Hallé play the A minor? She is playing it now. It is worth your while to listen.

So the day passes; a dull, silent, heavy day—a day like all her days. She does not complain. There are the tramps filling their craving stomachs with wild berries, the food of the birds and the beasts, to numb the famine pangs; there are the tattered trollops in the ginshops; there are the hungered babes at the baker's window. Shall she complain? she who has eaten fourpennyworth of cold beef for her dinner, and slaked her thirst with a tumbler of claret-and-water. God! who is she that she should have a roof over her head, and food to eat, rather than these her brothers, her sisters?

So the day passes, and tea-time brings back Bertram.

'Well,' she says, when he is fairly in the room and the door is shut, 'did you ask him?'

'Yes,' he answers, 'I did; and,' slipper-hunting, 'what's more, he said he should be delighted to come.'

Chapter III.

WAS LIFE WORTH LIVING THEN?

'Mrs. Hilyard, Mr. Brome.'

A pale-faced, brown-eyed, white-throated woman in silvery raiment, with a crimson rose in her bosom and foamy frills of fragile lace about her neck and wrists, looks up at, smiles gravely upon, and shakes hands with, a large man in black.

It is seven o'clock on Saturday evening. The salmon is coming up-stairs escorted by the cucumber and the potatoes, and waited upon by the lobster sauce. The tremendous ceremony which has constituted itself chief end and extreme limit of existence to Kate for the last twenty-four hours is positively on the brink of performance. Conversation with strangers—polite conversation having for its basis nothing, for its object nothing—is always somewhat of a trial to this exceedingly ill-bred and indecorous person; but just at present conversation of any kind is a sheer impossibility, owing to the turbulent behaviour of the fish and his attendants; so she sits silent, her soft hands folded in her lap, and watches Ada reel weakly with her charger tableward.

Our friend Bertram, however, is more than equal to the emer gency. He will tell you that at college he was the most popul man going. Why? Because he could talk. 'Fellows like a ma with plenty to say for himself, you know.' He is saying plenty fo himself now, always with one eye on the table laid by Kate hersel and glorious with glass and damask and electro-plate and swee bright flowers.

'Yes, certainly,' exclaims he largely, in reply to some remar made by his guest anent the fascinations of Swiss scenery; 'but w didn't do much in the way of Alpine climbing. We went up th Righi, and stayed a night at the hotel on the top—what do the call it? I think we'll have the cucumber on the chiffonier.'

'And saw the sun rise, I suppose,' says the same voice whic told the coachman to drive to the Vaudeville about this time nin days ago, addressing itself to Kate.

'I don't know,' smiles she, rising from her chair—the cover are off, the feast is ready. 'The "we" my husband speaks of con sisted of himself and a young man he went abroad with.'

'O,' remarks Adam, shaking himself down into his clothes in that peculiar fashion common to all very long-legged men, I observe, and he follows her to the table.

Mr. Hilyard is pleasantly mindful of the feelings of his fellow-creatures. When he dines with persons of tender years, or the 'people at Clapham,' evangelical religion hallowing the parental roof, if not the parental person, the most select form of grace is duly given forth by him with goodly emphasis; in the society of the unregenerate, however, he stays his tongue, and partakes of such good things as Providence may have bestowed upon him unblessed. He partakes on this wise now.

'Were you talking of Edlingham, dear?' inquires he, when the salmon is distributed, and they have all three helped themselves to such things as they have a fancy for. 'Perhaps you've heard of him, or rather his father?' turning to Mr. Brome, who, having eaten nothing since breakfast, is devouring rapidly and with judgment. 'Let me recommend you to try the sherry. It's some of Heatly's.'

'Thanks. May I give you some, Mrs. Hilyard?'

Kate lets him fill her glass. She slept badly last night, the effect of no exercise and too much thought. She could now shut her eyes and slumber peacefully, sitting bolt upright, so overtired is she with all the shopping and fretting and fussing she has had to undergo in order that this great, acute-eyebrowed, square-jawed biped may be provided with food which he could very well afford to buy for himself, nay, which he has himself bought in fact, if you insist upon bald accuracy.

'Edlingham!' echoes he, setting down the decanter and returning to his plate. 'One of the Berkshire Edlinghams?'

'Yes,' says Mr. Hilyard, helping himself to a fresh supply of oster sauce. 'Old Edlingham's got a wonderful yacht called the zebel, you know—people say that he christened her after his wife,' d Bertram chuckles pleasantly; 'but of that of course no one n be a judge but himself.'

'I think I saw one of the Miss Edlinghams at Goodwood last ar; she was carrying on with the Duke of Eborsham rather, and aking herself slightly conspicuous.'

'Indeed! You know they thought the Duke was going down ere; but I met a man I know the other day—Poynter Dinmont, on of Lord Dinmont—and he said that it was only one of Edling-am's happy mistakes. He's rather celebrated for making those sort of blunders, as perhaps you're aware;' scrubbing the vinegar out of his beard.

'No,' says Brome. 'I don't think I ever set eyes on the man, unless he was with his people on the lawn, or in the wood rather; but I have some relations who live near their place, so I've heard a little about them.'

'Well, I took this fellow abroad. He got rusticated, and his father didn't know what on earth to do with him; so he came to me, and asked me if I'd be responsible for his good behaviour for six months; but it only turned out to be three in the end'—watching Ada bring in a second charger, wherein sits the duck—'and an exceedingly jolly time we had of it. I hope you didn't forget the apple sauce, Mrs. Hilyard;' smiling jocosely at that lady.

'O my!' exclaims Ada, who is a *vive* little person, and given to the prompt expression of her feelings. 'Just think if we 'ad! Wouldn't that be a treat!'

It is impossible not to laugh. Mr. Brome laughs till the room ings again. Even Kate laughs too.

'It is of no use for us to pretend to be grand,' says she pa-etically; 'our native vulgarity is too patent.'

'By the way,' remarks Adam, turning round towards her when riety rules again and fixing her eyes with his—rather nice eyes, hinks, only so solemn—'how obstinate Yankees are about pronunciation of that word "sauce"! You know, they will call it s." I very nearly got shot for asking a man to spell it.'

You have been in America, then?' exclaims she with some st. The land of Holmes and Longfellow and Walt. Whitman aquin Miller and Emerson and Hawthorne is her Palestine. e tells her that he has been there twice, each time on a shoot-edition; he tells her some things she knew before, and more that she did not know; he makes her talk to him, and let and understand how bright and clever and well read she d then he discovers that there is about her, in her shabby s, with her straight smooth hair parted simply on her high

white forehead and knotted about that big tortoiseshell comb, without a chain or brooch or bracelet on her, her sole ornaments the crimson rose, the foamy frills of lace, a charm which better-dressed, better-looking women have lacked for him, as one man of all the men in the world. So the duck changes to gooseberry tart, and gooseberry tart to creamcheese smothered in mustard-and-cress, and creamcheese to crystallised fruits and figs and raisins; and Bertram uncorks the claret, and Kate fancies that she has never spent a pleasanter hour and a half since the days when she and Marie Buer—the girl she was so fond of, when the world was golden and the wind was song—and the man who shall be nameless, used to eat whitebait and drink wine that seemed hardly of earthly vintage, and watch the lazy lighters travel with the tide, and the tall-masted vessels toil slowly on behind the brisk steam-tugs, as they sat together of a summer evening in the great window of the Ship.

'A penny for your thoughts, old lady!' exclaims Mr. Hilyard, after a somewhat lengthy silence.

This worthy soul has eaten and is satisfied; he drinketh and is of a cheerful countenance.

Kate smiles—a slow reposeful smile.

'I should do badly if other people thought my thoughts worth no more than a penny,' she says quietly.

'Do you ever go to the Zoological Gardens on Sunday afternoon?' inquires Adam with a certain abruptness, looking at her in that strange set way of his.

'No,' she replies, as if surprised at the question.

'I ask,' he goes on, 'because I have two tickets for to-morrow, and if you would like to have them—'

A quick flush of pleasure dyes her face. The unaccustomed relaxation, the sudden sense of being still young, with warm glad blood leaping in her veins and stinging her torpid senses to a keener joy, fill her with longing for fresh air and pleasant sights and sounds. She would like to go; but she has no dress decent enough to brave the strictures of a spider-eyed London crowd, no bonnet, no parasol; and Bertram will be at Fulham, having accepted an invitation to luncheon given him by his aunt, who lives there. Little by little her cheeks pale, little by little the happy smile freezes on her lips.

'Thank you,' she answers quickly, 'you are very kind; but I'm afraid they would be no use to me.'

And then she sighs ever so little, still he hears her.

'Clothes again, I suppose,' says Mr. Hilyard, setting down his fourth glass of claret half emptied, and laughing a fat comfortable laugh. 'Let me give you a piece of advice, Brome. When you marry, lay in an enormous stock of silks and satins and velvets and sealskins, and you'll always find your wife in a good temper.'

'Indeed!' smiles Adam. 'Connubial bliss must be a slightly expensive luxury at that rate.'

'I believe you,' replies Bertram, leaning back sideways in his chair, with one arm over the back and his legs crossed, the picture of refined repletion. 'A man oughtn't to marry under two thousand a year if he wants to be happy, and of that two thousand he will be expected to spend at least one thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine pounds nineteen shillings and ninepence on "things." '

'What a pity it is,' observes Kate coolly, getting up from the table and departing to her little armchair by the open window, 'that wit and truth are so seldom compatible!'

To talk like that, when she strives and toils and energises early and late to save his money, to earn her moiety of the meat that perisheth, to clothe her back out of her brains, and to this man of all others—this man who has just put his hand in his pocket and pulled out five hundred pounds, who will of course now, if his hopes should be disappointed, his capital dissipated, say in his heart, 'That woman spent it; she is the thief who has walked-off with my money'—is it not enough to drive a thinking being frantic?

But her acerbity falls flat and nerveless on the ears of her lord. He is in far too blissful a condition to permit his serenity to be ruffled and his digestive powers impaired by the captious wagging of a woman's tongue.

Adam lays his napkin on the table, pushes back his chair, and walks over to where the said woman is sitting; he has had enough of his host, and his host's third-rate St. Emilion, for the present.

'And so you don't care about the Zoo,' he observes, finding a seat opposite to her and lowering himself gradually thereinto. 'You know you could go to church in the morning, and so satisfy the cravings of your conscience;' smiling leniently.

'My wife doesn't go to church,' enounces Mr. Hilyard; 'she is a Huxleyite.'

'Indeed! Perhaps you patronise Voysey, then?' rather curiously.

She interests him a little. I do not think he has troubled his head much concerning her probable *personelle* during these thirty hours or so which have elapsed since he first heard that she was willing to eat her dinner in his company to-night; it is not his way to dwell on dim uncertainties, he has lived too quick all his life long; but if the thought did ever cross his brain, 'What is Mrs. Hilyard like?' he certainly never conjured up in reply anybody half so nice, so thoroughly a lady, so companionable as she really is. You see, Bertram is not one of those men of whom one says instinctively, 'I shouldn't mind knowing his wife; I'm certain she must be pleasant, or he couldn't have married her.' No; to look at this amiable gentleman as he plods along the street, as he sits there now, for instance, pick-

ing his teeth, you would say nothing of the sort; you would say, in all probability, 'Preserve me from the woman — an awful sack of a creature, with one brace of twins clinging to her neck and another to her knees. What, call upon her?—dine with her?—the Lord forbid!'

So Mr. Brome inquires whether Kate patronises Mr. Voysey and Sunday Evenings for the People, and marvels as he speaks.

'No,' she says, lacing her white fingers loosely as they lie upon her lap. 'I have had enough of men and men's doctrines; I dare to think for myself now;' and she looks up at him with her grave yellow eyes.

'I do not believe much in any other sort of thinking,' he replies soberly; 'and I have been as near death in the course of my travels as most living people.'

'Have you?' says she, still considering him, and then her eyes fall on her hands. Death and pain and trial are no Sunday subjects of contemplation to her, no texts whereon to hang goody-goody reflections and twaddling aspirations after impossible piety and a self-made heaven.

'Of course,' observes Mr. Hilyard leniently, betaking himself to the hearthrug, and scrubbing his back against the mantelpiece, 'people will have their opinions. I myself, for instance, don't entirely agree with the High-Church party, although I belong to it, as to the significance of baptism; but I certainly think that—er—' thumping himself violently between the shoulders—'that it wouldn't do for these rationalistic notions to get into the agricultural districts.'

'Certainly not,' replies Kate, curling her lip. 'The country bumpkin has got his rotatory calabash and his Grand Llama; by all means let him keep them; he and they suit each other admirably.'

Mr. Brome laughs.

'You are severe on the existing order of things,' he says deprecatorily.

'I have suffered from it.'

'That's because you will take everything *au sérieux*,' smiles Bertram, sticking his hands in his pockets and staring at his toes. 'Now, what I say is, "Be peaceful."'

'And you call that Christianity!'

'It does seem rather odd, doesn't it?' observes Adam dryly. 'Unluckily too Fate declines to adopt that line of argument nowadays. But to descend from the ridiculous to the sublime, can't you be persuaded to go and see the monkeys?' smiling upon her beneficently. 'You know you adore monkeys.'

She has been telling him about a certain Miss Jennie and Miss Susie, not wholly unknown to fame.

'Only Mr. Buckland's,' she smiles back; 'and then I prefer them on paper to in the flesh.'

'If you persuade Mrs. Hilyard to alter her mind when she has once made it up, you must be uncommonly clever,' observes Bertram, gulping down a yawn; he begins to find his guest a trifle heavy. In a general way the men who come to see them—or who used to come rather, nobody ever comes now—talk to him more than to his wife. They are old college friends, fond of telling long-winded stories about people Kate has never heard of, fond of wondering what has become of Jack, and how many children Dick has got, and whether Harry ever contrived to settle his Oxford ticks, caring as little about all she cares about as she cares about them—licensed bores. Who has not, Job-like, cursed the day they were born, by reason of such? But this slayer of big game, this despiser of women, seems to find her the more interesting of the two; whereat his pedagogueship is astonied and gapes.

Kate sits silent awhile. There is a certain awkwardness about repeating the same words over and over again. Then she says gravely:

'I should like to go very much; but as I can't, it is no good thinking about it. Would you ring for tea, Bertram? I am afraid you will have a very dull evening, Mr. Brome—we have so little to amuse anybody with.'

'There's a pack of cards somewhere,' interposes Bertram, jerking up the rickety bell-pull, from which the ivory knob has disappeared long ago; 'and the piano—I forget whether you're fond of music, Brome?'

'Yes, very,' replies he, in a sort of absent don't-care tone, scarcely calculated to render the task of playing or singing to him deliriously joyful.

'Mrs. Hilyard is a pupil of Mr. Hallé's,' continues his host, as Ada brings in the tea-tray, a daintily-set little tray with a bright teapot and cream-jug on it, the peculiar lustre whereof is due to the fact that Kate cleaned them herself this afternoon; she is so rigidly refined in all her notions, art with her permeates the lowest stratum of existence.

'Mrs. Hilyard is a pupil of Mr. Hallé's,' repeats Bertram, eyeing this pleasing proof of his wife's devotion with evident satisfaction; 'so her playing is slightly better than that of most amateur pianistes.'

'Indeed, I scarcely think it a compliment to be reckoned an amateur,' she observes, getting up and assuming her post as tea-maker.

Adam's eyes follow her as she walks across the room. How straight and well-made she is! how splendidly she carries that smooth brown head of hers! how gracefully she moves! Is it due to the schooling of the concert-room, or is she of her own self a little set apart from the ruck of women, a little higher, a little lower?

'You are fond of a public life,' he remarks, noticing for the first time how very white her hands are, how round and beautiful her wrists.

'I might have been if I had ever tried it. Do you take sugar?'

He says, 'Yes.'

'But unfortunately lack of funds prevented my becoming a sufficiently good player to come out regularly.'

Poor and quasi-professional and a lady! Where on earth did this necessitous not-too-scrupulous instructor of youth pick her up? He comes for his tea and stands drinking it beside her in silence.

'I don't think your heart would have stood it if you had,' says the instructor of youth blandly; 'besides, after all, your professional musician is always rather a cad. Of course I except such men as Ousely and Bennett and Otto Goldschmidt and Sullivan; but the small fry—hum!' and he compresses his lips and wags his head unutterably.

'It is scarcely possible for every one to be great,' says Adam thoughtfully, stooping down to look at some photographs of Strasburgh Cathedral which lie on a little table near him.

'No, indeed!' asséverates Kate with emphasis, making room for her husband's tea-cup beside her own. 'Will you have some more?'

'Please!' answers that gentleman, and forthwith applies himself to the agreeable task of recalling the past pleasures of choice tables d'hôte, and telling the usual traveller's tales about ordering carpet-bags instead of nightshirts, and plates instead of towels, the chief zest of the recital arising, be it understood, from the defenceless and unclothed condition of the distracted and incoherent wayfarer, and losing one's luggage, and being left with a toothbrush and a farthing for a fortnight, and dropping one's little all at Spa or Homburg or Baden, and knocking down the King of Holland by mistake in the Hague—O, mercy!—don't you know them every one by heart? Couldn't you repeat them verbatim in your sleep?

The continental reminiscences concluded with one final and magnifical fanfare on the chord of Edlingham, otterskin coat, green tie, diamond ring, yacht, big country house and all; and a group of persons of divers and sundry uglinesses, habited in surplices, and backed by gothic masonry, brings Oxford on the carpet.

'You don't know any of these fellows, of course,' says Mr. Hilyard, gazing on them tenderly; 'they're all members of our choir. That man,' obliterating one face with the tip of a first finger, 'has got a stunning tenor voice—he's now at Windsor.'

'It's some years since I was at Oxford,' remarks Adam, turning over the pages listlessly; 'and when I was there I don't think I liked it as well as Cambridge.'

'You are an Etonian though, are you not?' inquires Kate with a smile. She loves the sound of the good old name.

'Yes;' and he looks up and smiles too. 'How do you know that?'

'Bertram told me so, and I suppose I remembered it because I'm so fond of the school. My father was there for ever so long; six or seven years, I believe.'

'Really!' and his face lights up with quite keen interest. 'I suppose you've been there, then.'

'No,' she says. 'But it is a pet dream of mine to see it all some day.'

'Yes, you should; you should go down on The Fourth; but it is always worth a visit;' and his eyes wax tender as a man's will when he speaks of the treasured things of his youth.

'I was at Rossall,' observes Bertram, retreating to the hearth-rug. 'Most beastly hole any poor wretch ever was sent to. Bully you—bully you within an inch of your life; and as to learning anything—I not only didn't learn, but I forgot everything I ever had earnt.'

'I fancy those North-country schools are rather rough,' says Adam, loitering about the room, and inspecting Kate's humble bits of beauty. A good statuette here, a head painted on ivory there, a Sèvres cup, a pretty bit of mosaic.

'Totally unfit for gentlemen's sons—totally,' pursues Bertram vigorously; 'besides, you know what North-country people are—great hulking horse-chaunting brutes.'

'No,' exclaims Kate, 'no, no, no! You mustn't abuse the dear North before me. You forget I am a Yorkshire woman.'

'Are you indeed?' interposes Adam, halting in his peregrinations as if surprised by the statement.

'On my mother's side.'

'Then I suppose you're fond of riding?' and he sits down upon the sofa in that curious telescopic fashion of his.

'Yes, very;' with almost a sigh.

'You might have ridden to your heart's content if you could only have made yourself happy at Tew,' observes Bertram rather testily, rubbing up his hair. 'I had the grammar-school there, you know,' he continues, turning to Adam, who is already well aware of this interesting fact; 'not at all a bad place; but my lady must needs take into her head that she was aiding and abetting superstition by teaching the small boys their catechism, and going to tea at the vicarage about once a fortnight; so she made me give it up, and buy the goodwill of a commercial academy in Bristol—most awful swindle: I can't tell you all about it now, but I will some day, and you'll see what infernal rogues these scholastic agents are.'

Kate laughs.

'Don't be too minute,' she says; 'lack of atmosphere is as fatal in a narrative as in a painting!'

Mr. Brome smiles—a curious reflective sort of smile.

Bertram takes refuge in his whiskers. An oppressive silence ties their tongues.

Suddenly Kate breaks the spell by betaking herself to the piano; a perceptible expression of relief irradiates her husband's countenance.

'Going to play us something, dear!' he exclaims cheerfully, ungluing himself from the mantelpiece and sticking his hands in his pockets. 'What's it to be?'

'Do you indulge in the weakness of a favourite composer?' she inquires, turning with a smile to Adam.

'No,' he answers, waking up from his abstraction; 'I'm no musician, though I like music.'

'Before you begin,' interposes Mr. Hilyard, 'tell me one thing: have we any soda-water?'

'Plenty.'

'Also, do you mind our smoking?'

'Why do you ask? I thought you were aware of my profound contempt for hollow forms and ceremonies.'

'Always best to be on the safe side; however, as you are so gracious, I think we'll light up at once. What do you say, Brome?'

'Certainly, if Mrs. Hilyard really doesn't object.'

'No,' she replies, without looking up from the brown-papered heap of music in her lap. 'I don't really; tobacco is one of those evils of life to which I am perfectly resigned.'

'In that case,' exclaims Bertram hilariously, departing to the chiffonier and producing thence a decanter of brandy and a tin canister of golden leaf, '*fumons, buvons, vive la bagatelle!* as Edlingham says.'

Music, pipes, iced 'peg,' cosy, disjointed, rambling, confidential talk; can anything be pleasanter?

Big Ben booms out half-past eleven on the still warm air, before these three very dissipated and highly improper persons so much as dream that it is time for them to be thinking of bidding each other good-night.

Then, however, some such disagreeable reflection does with subtle venom communicate itself to Adam's mind, and shutting up his meerschaum in its well-worn red-leather case, he says:

'I think I must be off now, Mr. Hilyard, or I shall keep you up—'

'Well,' replies Bertram placidly, 'there's something in that but I hope we shall soon see you here again.'

He considers the entire thing a success, from the salmon to the b-and-s, and poor human nature is prone to the repetition of its triumphs.

'Thanks!' returns Adam. 'Good-night, Mrs. Hilyard! Is it really to be no monkeys to-morrow?' holding her cool soft hand in his

she says, shaking her head and smiling, so that you can
n line of whiteness between her lips; 'the poor monkeys!'
monkeys indeed!' repeats he pathetically, and goes.
m follows him. Kate hears them talking a little together
sage, then the front-door slams, quick feet run down the
walk away round the corner into the Vauxhall Bridge-
Richard is himself again.
,' says Mr. Hilyard, as he reënters the drawing-room
the door behind him, 'what do you think of him?'
s caught her in the full enjoyment of a roomy yawn. The
are quenched, the curtain is down, the house is emptying,
are getting on their brown-holland nightdresses, and she
as any working woman has a right to be at the end of
work.
; do you think of him?' repeats Bertram, when her mouth
ed its natural dimensions.
s very tall,' she says, taking the rose out of her bosom
ng it—such a poor crumpled mockery of a rose.
and his nose is too thick,' complacently patting his own
olfactory organ; 'but he's not a bad fellow, take him all

carrying the poor rose away into the bedroom, and return-
in a tumbler full of water, 'not at all bad.'
you love your Baba, don't you, pet?' catching her by the
drawing her to him, and kissing her white weary face;
ar pretty thing it is—playing away so charmingly, and
nicely, and making itself so pleasant. You do love me,

urse,' she answers with a slow faint smile; 'whom else
love? One must love some one.'

WOODCOCK SHOOTING

'BREAKFAST by cock-light, mind. Hunter's beef, and any amount of eggs and bacon. Rowe, the huntsman, will throw up a handful of dust to your window, and get the kettle boiling, so you can steal away and none be the wiser; only be sure to turn out at once, or we shall never get to work.'

The gentleman to be called thus early was to arrive by the night-coach from a successful matriculation at Oxford, and Rowe—or as he was more generally styled, Rawe—was the huntsman, who filled up his time by shooting on non-hunting days. Rawe, although a knowing hand enough with a pack of foxhounds, was a very numb performer with a gun, and was always glad of any extra assistance towards making a decent bag, and keeping on terms with a not very exacting master. He appeared to think that the more dogs he could get together, as ours was a rough country, the better; and under this idea, had 'boned' every cur he could find about, and locked them all up in a loose horse-box overnight.

Punctual to a minute—five sharp—our Oxonian arrived. Our breakfast was soon despatched, and the heterogeneous collection of nondescripts turned loose. Some bolted, some fought like Trojans, some were coaxed into remaining, and all made a row perfectly hideous, and did the very thing we did not want—woke up the entire household of our highly-respected and wealthy uncle.

'Where's Dandy, Rawe?'

But the question was superfluous. Rawe never went shooting without Dandy, a strapping great liver-and-white spaniel, who was his very *alter ego* in all but speech, having an enormous capacity of stomach, and a beautifully absorbent system. Dandy was always right, no matter what errors he might be committing, nor how much praise ought to have been bestowed on others.

'O, here's old Dan,' says Rawe; 'never fear; and two more as fine young spannles as need to be.'

'Better try up the river, eh? and then into Jew's Wood?'

'Sure to find a cock in Jew's Wood, if not afore; only I'm afeard I'll never bring 'un down. Never could shoot a cock in my life; and if I don't bring home three or four to-day, it'll be as much as my place is worth, for the master jaw'd me like a pickpocket last time, and he wants a cock or two for a friend bad.'

'Mark, cock!'

Bang! bang! went both Rawe's barrels without the slightest

ct; a fine woodcock being sprung near the river, and flying into thickest part of Jew's Wood. We marked him down accurately, made arrangements for circumventing him safely next time of ing.

'Take the gun, sir, for dear mercy's sake!' says Rawe; ''tis a pity to miss this bird, and I shall be sure to do the same again, this gentleman here can't see a stim.'

But having no certificate, I had faithfully promised my relative host, from whom I had 'great expectations,' that nothing ıld induce me to assist Rawe, as there were numbers of dis-cted men about too ready to inform against anybody connected ı the 'big house,' because the proprietor of that establishment been 'down upon them' for poaching, to a rare tune, on more ı one memorable occasion. But who can resist the temptation shot at a woodcock, marked-in to a yard or two in the seclusion wood?

'Give me the gun, then, Rawe, you duffer, and come on by my , for old Dan will never push him up without you.'

We had pretty well shaken off the cocktail curs by this time, the 'spannles' had it all to themselves, but Dan was always in a hundred yards of Rawe, and, like Cordelia, his voice

> 'was ever soft,
> Gentle, and low, an excellent thing in'—spaniel.

The woodcock rose just where we expected, and bending towards river, offered a rather quick shot, which any tolerable marksman ld not have missed. Rawe, in his delight at the kill, was bolt-off to capture the booty, but fortunately I volunteered that ser-, and insisted upon his taking the gun again in case of accidents. He had hardly done so, and was preparing to reload, when there ng out upon our group a gentleman by the name of Doney, one ıe most inveterate poachers of the whole country-side, and who experienced the 'utmost rigour of the law,' under my uncle's inistration, too often not to cause him to wish to retaliate on first opportunity. What he was doing in the wood must ever ıin a mystery; though I have my own misgivings that Rawe's acity about the 'young man from Oxford,' and 'maister's ne-',' going out shooting, are in some measure responsible for Mr. ey's presence on this momentous occasion. But it is easy to er a plausible excuse for being discovered in a wood at any un-onable hour among the aboriginal natives. Gathering nuts, ing blackberries, collecting firewood, can all be alleged as a sub-tial reason on the instant by an old poacher, with anything like nius for invention. Moreover, Rawe was not born under the et of St. Mary Axe, and was easily mollified with any attempt xplanation.

The weather was hard, and woodcocks were not lying much in thick covert, and we thought it good policy to get to the water again, and try up the bottom of the wood, where there were some firs and hollies. A woodcock is remarkably fond of a locality of this description, and the neighbourhood of a holly-bush is an especial attraction for him.

The poacher thought it prudent to levant, as he had taken nothing by his motion; for he probably considered that if his actions were watched 'with half the zeal that he had served' us, they would hardly prove reconcilable with his explanation to Rawe.

'Cock, Dan! Good dog, Dandy! Look out, sir; he's coming out.'

Bang! bang! go Rawe and the Oxonian together.

'Mark! mark!' shout they frantically, well knowing the effect of their discharge upon the woodcock.

We contrived to mark the bird down pretty accurately again, and the entreaties became pressing that I would have another shot, so that there might be a brace of 'the real article,' as the huntsman phrased it, to show to master. The case was one of necessity, and there was no use in refusing when friends were so urgent. I prepared to use Rawe's gun again, upon the understanding that the strictest secrecy should be observed, until the Squire would be likely to hear of my disobedience with temper and reason. But why does Rawe 'hang fire' in the wood?

'Come in, sir,' cries he at last; 'or I shall never get out of this again.'

A perfect avalanche of snow had come down upon him from the fir-tops, and he lay at his length, or rather sat doubled up in an unrecognised attitude, in a sort of trench.

'Where's the gun?'

'O, there, there! If it had not been for the gun, I could have got out of this, perhaps; but now, if ever I do get out, I have caught the rheumatism for all my days, and my death too, I expect.'

And he was accustomed to

> 'Beware of colds, catarrhs, and toothache, got
> By thin-soled shoes;'

for his exterior showed that every reasonable precaution had been taken to prevent an incurrence of these calamities. But the gun had been suffered to fall clean under water in Rawe's attempt to save a tumble. The suspicion was not unnaturally aroused that this was a premeditated accident, and a decent ruse for getting out of more shooting failures for the day. The gun proved utterly useless for any practical purpose, as we found to our cost some time afterwards. For the moment, however, resort was had to my friend's

gun, who was only too glad of an opportunity of getting out of an exhibition before the huntsman. As we wended our way up the old gully, and drew near the spot where the bird was located, Rawe suddenly exclaimed that he saw the woodcock, and diligently collected the 'spannles' and the redoubtable Dandy about him, while I made for the bird, which I could not see. The woodcock fell rather too much shattered for good workmanship, but that was the merest trifle in our estimation. It was now time to try to do something with the damaged gun; and we got it into a condition which we thought warranted a reloading.

A teal—that most delicate dainty of the duck tribe, 'whose delicacy of flesh, and the wholesome nourishment it affords,' as says the learned Willoughby, 'doth deservedly challenge for it the first place among those of its kind'—was then shot famously by my friend, who was perfectly astonished at his own handiwork, having never bagged a bird of the kind before. But the teal is the most foolish also of the duck tribe; but this was a fact which I did not think it worth while to mention at the moment.

It is not often you can get a shot at golden plover, unless you resort to the practice of stratagem or ambuscading. But a whole flock of them 'rounded' Rawe almost immediately after the death of the teal; and if his gun had not snapped both barrels, muff as he was, he could not have failed to bring down several fine birds. It was very vexing, for plovers form 'a dainty dish to set before a king;' and these birds came round with the wind, the leading birds turning until they formed a double row with the tail, in such a manner as one sees about three or four times in a lifetime. If we could have bagged some of these, our affairs would have begun to look quite favourable again, because, to have killed two woodcocks, in a country where they are scarce and unusually difficult to shoot, might be thought 'none so dusty.' But we shot now 'turn and turn about' with the only available gun, and did some very fair execution among the snipe, and shot a rabbit or two. There is one little jack snipe, I believe not difficult to be found on the moor at this moment, which I do not think it is in the power of man to shoot. He has been popped at by many visitors, but all acknowledge their inability to bring him down; and this is probably from a habit he has of flying towards your face, thus making a difficult shot. My friend had his shot at him, as usual, without ruffling a feather; and he remains for practice for any unfledged sportsman who may fancy trying his hand on a piece of rare raw material; and as among that class of individual all geese are swans, the fortunate killer may talk of him as a woodcock. 'We met,' says a sportsman, in a well-known publication, 'with an unfledged sportsman, who naïvely remarked that he came out principally to redeem his pledge to his wife, that he would bring her home a woodcock. He had,

he said, already followed one for nearly a week, and although he had every day got a shot, and one day two shots at him, he was always foiled. He, however, consoled himself that he should that day go home with a better grace, for although he could not fulfil the whole, he could the half of his promise, for he had shot a snipe.'

Coming near a dilapidated farmhouse, it occurred to Rawe that the farmer, whom he knew, would lend us his gun for the day. The farmer had no objection, and took the damaged article to keep until called for. We calculated without our host once more; for this farmer was anything rather than friendly disposed towards our party, and thought he saw a fine opportunity of doing the Squire a bad turn. He knew we should try for a cock handy by his premises, and even went so far as to tell us the most likely spot where to find one at home. He evidently had calculated, knowing Rawe's inability with a gun, that I had been taking a stray shot or two, and thought what a grand thing it would be to catch me in this act red-handed. For this purpose he ensconced himself—after bidding us 'good-morning,' and wishing us good sport—in an old ditch, or gully; but unfortunately for his strategy and stratagem, my friend missed another cock, which we marked right in the wake of this fellow. The man was obliged to turn about in his den, and the bird, on being flushed the second time, flew just over him; and the near-sightedness of my friend—who did not kill his bird—led to consequences disastrous to his purse and to the farmer's person. This was another marvellously narrow escape for me; but the farmer's hurts were healed for a matter of a sovereign, notwithstanding his dastardly conduct.

It was now our ill-luck to be astonished at seeing a lot of wild geese flying over our heads, all in a row of course, and looking as if firing the ramrod at them would be attended with better results than using shot—'getting 'em all ready spitted for cooking,' as Rawe remarked. The temptation of following these over the moor was too great for the Oxonian, and we saw no more of him until the following morning, when we heard that he had evinced a strong desire, on his return to the hotel, to go to bed with his boots on—a proceeding at which mine host was much scandalised, and the entire establishment astonished.

Where woodcocks are plentiful, it matters not much what kind of good-working spaniel you may use, provided he be steady; but in the West, the Clumber, though very handsome—being of the highly-prized lemon-and-white colour—is not much patronised, because of his muteness—a qualification not desirable in thick covert. The Welsh cocker 'is one of the best of this division, being of good size, with strong loins, capital legs and feet, and an excellent nose. The coat is very slightly curled on the body, but the ear and legs are feathered, the tail being very nearly bare of hair. These dogs

are still extensively used in Wales for the purpose of hunting the cocks, which are to be met with in the Principality in large numbers during the season, and form one of the chief attractions to the shooter. The Devonshire cocker closely resembles the Welsh dog, both being of a deep liver colour.' Liver colour has always been the favourite one for spaniels, and for retrievers on game, wherever I have been; and the quotation I have made from *Stonehenge on the Dog* exactly describes the best kind of spaniel for woodcock shooting. Of the manner of breaking for covert hunting, the same author gives excellent advice, which, however, I do not feel justified in extracting, but its perusal will well be worth the attention of the sportsman.

On our road homewards we encountered a flight of cocks, which we counted, as they dropped-in in pairs, to the number of eighteen brace. On the following morning, concluding that these had taken up their abode in the well-known wood, we followed them up, but could not flush a single bird, their ravenous appetite after a long fast probably compelling them to take up more spongy quarters. Capital sport was had with them, however, a day or two afterwards. Perhaps I have made too light of the crime of taking a stray shot or two without credentials; but so far from applauding or defending this conduct, I will conclude with this 'caution,' which I have just read in a country newspaper: 'On Thursday a miner, having had permission to shoot over some lands near the Town Mills, provided himself with a gun, and went out for that purpose. Not possessing a ten-shilling license, in order to evade the law he carried the gun, which was loaded, under his coat. This reckless proceeding was soon the cause of the discharge of the gun, which shattered the poor fellow's leg in such a frightful manner that, on a consultation with three medical gentlemen, immediate amputation was deemed to be necessary.' Poor fellow! it was a very inglorious result of the generous offer to shoot over the lands near the Town Mills, for at their best they could have produced nothing beyond a landrail, a snipe, and a flock of starlings!

SIRIUS.

Y^E EXPLANATION OF TRUE CHIVALRIE

ONE summer eve, upon the grass reclining,
I lay and thought—and this thought puzzled me:
'What is this beacon which, so brightly shining,
Men follow after, and call Chivalry?'

I thought upon the valiant old Crusaders,
Who vow'd the Sepulchre to render free;
Although high-minded, they were still invaders,
And yet they're called the stars of Chivalry.

I ponder'd on the glorious Middle Ages,
Their heralds clothed with gorgeous blazonry;
Unletter'd knights and unenlighten'd pages
Are here set forth as types of Chivalry.

And while I hesitated, thus uncertain,
I saw, or in my fancy seem'd to see,
The clouds, unfolding like a purple curtain,
Disclose the Goddess of pure Chivalry.

And thus she spoke: 'O, much-bewilder'd mortal,
Forsake uncertainty, and learn from me;
Enter my temple,—open stands the portal,—
And see therein the truth of Chivalry.'

I enter'd; and, in letters bright and golden,
Beheld this legend, clear and fair to see
In burnish'd characters, strange-shaped and olden,
'Y^e explanation of true Chivalrie:'

'To live, to love, to have no thought of evil;
To hold to right, though hard the task may be;
To wrestle with suggestions of the devil;—
This is the creed of purest Chivalrie.'

E. CHARLTON FOX.

ROBSON AND SONS, PRINTERS, PANCRAS ROAD, N.W.

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THE MYSTERIOUS GE[illegible] IN THE O.P. BOX.

THE

BELGRAVIA ANNUAL

EDITED BY M. E. BRADDON

THREE TIMES

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

CHAPTER I. THE FIRST TIME.

'POSITIVELY the last night of Herr Rudolph Prusinowski and the performing lions! Positively the last night! For the benefit of Herr Rudolph Prusinowski. Under the distinguished patronage of their Majesties Queen Victoria, the Emperor of China, the Cham of Tartary, his Serene Highness the Grand Duke of Baden, Simeon Muddlebrain, Esq. M.P., the Mayor and Corporation of Spindlecum, and other august personages too numerous to mention. Come early. Positively the last time. Come and see the lions. Herr Rudolph Prusinowski, the favourite of crowned heads and the élite of Europe. Take notice! The great Prusinowski has had the honour of performing before the Mikado of Japan. The world-renowned Prusinowski has been decorated with the order of Rouge et Noir by the Grand Duchess Selzerwasserburg. Don't miss the lions!'

The above sentences, and many others of the same character—in which a picturesque fancy, aided by the experience of a public career, trifled with the sobrieties of fact and tripped lightly across the borderland of fiction—appeared in gigantic black letters upon a yellow poster on the side wall of the Queen's Theatre, Spindlecum, and in the streets and market-place, upon the quays, and in the back slums of the same town. Spindlecum was a large manufacturing town—a town that did a good deal of business in the export way, and had much commerce by land and sea, and Spindlecum could boast of two theatres: the Royal, an elegantly-appointed edifice in a side-street off the quay, with a stone portico surmounted by a bust of Shakespeare; a house about which elderly inhabitants of Spindlecum cherished traditions of Edmund Kean, and where Macready and Harley were remembered as stock actors, but a house which had never paid a manager within the memory of man: and the Queen's, a vast barn-like building, with a lofty roof supported by iron girders, three tiers of boxes, and Alpine heights in the way of galleries, which, contemplated from the

broad valley of the pit, seemed inaccessible to the foot of man. The Queen's was making a fortune for its managers. There was a sixpenny pit, and there was a threepenny gallery, whereby the house was never empty, and on Mondays and Saturdays overflowed with noisy human life. The audience at the Queen's was critical, but on the whole good-natured; requiring plenty of life and movement in the pieces, and what may be called showy action in the performers. The Queen's liked stars, and was tolerably universal in its appreciation of these luminaries: this week clamorous in their applause of some stalwart Othello or loud-voiced Hamlet, next week gaping entranced upon the contortions of a family of acrobats; now crowding to see Mr. Reginald Montmorency and his celebrated mare Black Bess in the grand spectacular drama of *Dick Turpin, or the Ride to York*, anon rushing to behold Signor Poloni and his striped Zebra of the Prairie.

A man with a pale sallow face, blue chin, and close-cut hair sat in a lounging attitude upon a low wall opposite the stage-door of the Queen's, smoking a meditative pipe, and contemplating the big yellow poster with a dreamy fondness. He had a little group of satellites about him, also close-cropped, blue-chinned, and tobacco consuming; minor lights in the dramatic heaven, the stock company of the Queen's, who were thrown a little into the background by the lions, shuffling through a preliminary melodrama nightly, before an audience who beheld them with impatience, and heard them sometimes with derision, eager for the grand business of the evening.

'I think that ought to hit 'em up,' said the Herr thoughtfully (he spoke excellent English for a foreigner, but seemed scarcely to have acquired the language in the most aristocratic or æsthetic circles). 'The Mikado looks well, doesn't he?'

'First rate,' replied M
Zouche, the walking g
'Was he a nice kind of
Mikado?'

Herr Prusinowski turne
templative eyes upon the
with a look of placid scorn

'You ain't so jolly green
pose I ever set eyes upon hin
knocking the ashes out o
'I was never in Japan in
never nearer than a japa
stick. The Mikado is a saf
is; who's to ask any questi
him? And so's the Cham o
I always bring out them t
last night. Queen Victor
mate business. I did per
before the royal servants,
fiver from the royal seckit
is immediate patronage.'

'I expect you'll have
house, cully,' remarked M
kins, the low comedian, a
with a falsetto voice.

'I look forward to it, T
and if it goes over eighty,
a supper, mind that.'

There was a subdued
applause.

'Hot or cold?' inquired
Zouche.

'Hot,' replied the li
'None of your cold fowls
your pastry and rubbish, f
sirloin of beef at top, and
goose at bottom, a veal
stewed steak at the sides,
of smoking hot vegetables
old stilton and a bowl o
wind up with, and as mu
pagne as you can swall
brandy-and-water to settle
stomachs. That's what I'll
Lion and Lamb, if the h
over eighty when the hal
the boxes is in.'

This time the applause w

'I always said you we
good fellow, Bill,' said Mr.
'and I don't mind how o
it again.'

It is to be observed that

dikins addressed the distinguished Rudolph by the simpler cognomen Bill, one of the playful licenses of friendship, no doubt.

'It's wonderful how those animals draw,' said Mr. de la Zouche thoughtfully, as if he were contemplating the feasibility of setting-up on his own account as a lion-tamer. 'You've been here three seasons, Prusinowski, and, egad, the people ain't tired of 'em yet. They seem as eager as ever. One would suppose they liked to see a poor beggar hazard his life every night.'

'There's something in that,' replied the Herr. 'If it wasn't for the danger, the wild-beast business would be as flat as ditch-water.'

'Were you ever frightened?' asked the walking gentleman. 'I know what a plucky fellow you are, and that you handle those three brutes as if they were so many tabby cats; but still sometimes, you know, a man's nerve must fail. Come, now, Prusinowski, were you never frightened?'

'Never but once,' answered the lion-tamer, 'and then I thought it was all over with me.'

He grew suddenly grave, gloomy even, at the mere recollection waked by the walking gentleman's inquiry.

'Never but once,' he repeated, 'and God grant I never may be so again! When a man in my trade loses his head, it's all up with him.'

'How did it happen, old fellow?' asked Mr. Tiddikins.

Herr Prusinowski stopped to fill his pipe before answering the question. It was four o'clock upon a blazing July afternoon, rehearsal was over, her Majesty's servants of the Queen's Theatre, Spindlecum, had dined in the intervals of the day's work at their several lodgings, and had nothing particular to do with themselves until tea-time. An actor of this class has generally a rooted aversion to going home.

'Well, you see,' the lion-tamer began in a leisurely way, stopping to take a few preliminary whiffs after those three words of prelude, 'I was at Manchester nigh upon five years ago, and it was my last night and my "ben," as it might be to-night.' A pause and a few more puffs. 'We was doing first-rate business, fizzing, and I don't think I was ever in such high spirits in my life. My pockets were stuffed with money that I'd been taking about the town for tickets, and I hadn't a place to let in my dress-circle.

"Why, Bill," says my little woman, when I kept running in and out of our lodgings between whiles at rehearsal—we was close agen the slum—taking her in a handful of money every time, "you seem as if you was bewitched; I don't like to see you like that. I had a Scotch friend once as said it was a bad sign—a sign of something going to happen."

"Lord love your little foolish heart," I answered, "it's a sign of nothing except that I'm going to have a screaming house to-night. I don't suppose there'll be a corner you can screw yourself into if you want to see me." For she's a rare one for going in front of a night, you know, is the missus.'

Mr. de la Zouche and Mr. Tiddikins murmured their acquaintance with this domestic fact. Herr Prusinowski smoked his pipe for a minute or so, and then went on:

'"Why, there's the family box!" she said.

'That's a large private box on the opposite prompt, that don't often let, unless there's Italian Opera, or Charles Mathews, or something out of the common.

"No, there ain't," I answered, laughing.

"What!" cried the missus, "is that let too?"

"Let this morning," said I, "and there's the money—three pound three—thirty-one-and-six of which comes to us."

'For I had a half share clear of expenses, same as here. Lizzie—that's my wife, you know—was quite proud to think I was going to have such a good box audience, for it isn't every box audience as will take to wild beasts. You may get schools and pious people, that object to the drama, but consider a man putting his head into a lion's mouth improving—there's quite a run upon lions in the Scriptures—but as a rule, your boxes are shady. So my Liz was proud of my dress-circle that night.

"I wonder whether it's the mayor and his family," she said, speculating about that big private box.

"No," I told her, "it's a gentleman and a stranger, no name."

'Well, the night came, a sweltering hot summer evening, such as it will be to-night. The performances began with one of your talkee-talkee genteel comedies, and the house was so full and noisy the actors couldn't hear themselves speak. They got through it somehow, there was a short overture, and then the curtain went up for my performance. The three lions discovered in a forest, to slow music, which gets a round for *them*, and gives me my entrance and reception.

'You know the beasts, they were the same three I've got now—Brown, Jones, and Robinson. Old Brown's a harmless old chap enough, not a sound tooth in his head, and no more harm in him than in an elderly jackass; Jones is a deep old dodger, but there isn't *much* harm in him; but Robinson's a nasty-tempered beast, a brute you never can be sure of, an animal that will lick your hand one minute, and be ready to snap your head off the next.

'Well, I got a first-rate reception; I thought the gallery would have never left off applauding; and the sight of the house, crammed to the ceiling, made me almost giddy. Perhaps it was the heat of the place, which was like an oven; perhaps, as I'd been standing treat or being stood for off and on pretty well all day, I may have taken a little more than was good for me; anyhow, I felt the house spinning round me, just as if I'd been some duffer of a novice, instead of the old stager I am.

'I looked at the family box O.P., curious to see who'd taken it. There was only one gentleman there, a man of fifty or thereabouts, with a cadaverous lantern-jawed face, and light reddish hair, very straight, combed neatly on each side of his forehead. He was dressed in black, regular evening dress, white choker and all complete, and, do you know, the instant I set eyes upon that man, he gave me a turn.'

'That was a queer fancy,' said Mr. de la Zouche, helping himself to tobacco from the Herr's gutta-percha pouch, which lay open on the wall.

'Perhaps it was; but if that night was to come over again, I should have the fancy over again,' replied Prusinowski. 'It was partly his own looks, I think, partly the way he looked at me; not like the rest of the audience, all good nature, expecting to be amused, but with a steadfast ravenous kind of look, that made my blood run cold. "That's a man who'd like to see something happen to me," I said to myself.

'I didn't give way to the fancy all at once. I began the performance; but I stole a glance at my sandy-haired pale-faced gentleman now and then, and always found him looking at me in the same way. He had large light-gray eyes, very light, and very prominent. I can see them now, and they followed every move I made, like a cat's following a mouse. He never moved his eyes from me, he never smiled, he never applauded; he sat in a half-crouching attitude, leaning over the front of the box, watching me, and he made me feel as if I had a ton weight tied to each of my legs. Everything went well for some time, though I felt I'd never done things worse. Brown and Jones

beautifully; but just to-
e last, when I had to put
into Robinson's mouth to
wn the curtain, I saw that
was in one of his nasty
I suppose the heat had
out—I know the perspira-
pouring down my face—or
he didn't like the look of
averous gentleman in the
box. Anyhow, he turned
d when I wanted to collar
nced away from me.
ouse turned as still as death
ioment, and I could see the
was frightened. I gave a
my gentleman in the box.
eaning a little farther over
ion, with something like a
his face. Such a smile; I
cy any one going to see a
g smiling like that.
to not pe vrighened, laties
lemens," I said in my broken
old Sauerkraut, the ophe-
the Lane, taught me that
id is nozing. Te peast vill
veesh;" and then I gave
a pretty smart cuff, and
drag his jaws open.
brute snarled, turned upon
in the next instant would
his teeth in my shoulder,
't given the signal for the
Half a dozen carpenters
pon the stage and helped
ickle him. We had him
ss than a minute; but just
ie moment, before the cur-
pped, it was as near as a

was a good deal of ap-
iot that I'd done anything
re it, for the business of
ly head in the brute's mouth
he bill, and the audience
swindled out of that; but
ently knew I'd been in dan-
they called me before the
I looked up at that white-
vil in the private box. He
ding up, rubbing his hands
isfied kind of way, as if he
had seen what he wanted to see; and as I passed just under him he said in a slow measured voice that gave me the shivers,

"A narrow escape, Herr. Very well done indeed! I congratulate you."

'I gave him a look, which he ought to have understood if he didn't, made my bow to the house, and went off the stage. Robinson was quiet enough by this time. My man Joe Purdy had walked him off to his box, and there he was growling over his shin-bones, as mild a lion as you'd wish to see. "Only let me get you safe back to London, my friend," says I, "and I'll take you down to Jamrack's and swop you for something better tempered. Talent is all very well; but temper's worth all the talent in the world." However, that's five years ago, and there's Robinson still performing with me. The brute has such a wonderful gift for his profession! and his heart and soul's in it too. Take that animal in the middle of the day, when he ain't particular hungry, and he's a decent fellow enough; but come between him and his business, and you'll find out what a lion is. He's the vainest beast out, and cuts up rough if he don't get a round of applause for every trick he does. But, Lord bless you, there's no such thing as genius without vanity. He's been a fortune to me first and last, has that animal. Brown and Jones are nothing more than supers to him.'

'You didn't see any more of your friend in the box?' inquired Mr. de la Zouche, who was not particularly interested in these praises of the gifted Robinson.

'Curse him, no! By the time I'd changed my clothes he had left the house. I went round to the box-office to see if the box-keepers could tell me anything about him. No; he was a stranger. He had taken his box that morning, finding there

was no stall to be had, and paid his three guineas without a question.

'Now I daresay you'll think me an out-and-out fool when I tell you I couldn't sleep that night, nor many nights after, for thinking of that man. I couldn't get his pale cheeks and lank jaws and light gray eyes, with that horrid gloating look in them, out of my mind. "That's a fellow who'd go to see a man hung," I said to myself. "That's a man who'd stand by to see his fellow-creatures hung, drawn, and quartered, and enjoy it—especially the drawing." I hadn't a doubt in my mind that he was on the look-out for an accident all the evening; I hadn't a doubt in my mind that it was through him I made a mess of it at the end.'

'Did you never see him again?' asked the low comedian.

'Never; God forbid I ever should, for I've a notion that if I did, it would be the death of me. I'm not a nervous man in a general way, nor superstitious either; but I'd give up the biggest haul I ever made by a benefit rather than act before that man.'

'A queer notion,' said the humorous Tiddikins.

'A very queer notion,' echoed the gentlemanly De la Zouche.

He was not a fine actor, the walking gentleman, belonging rather to that class of performer who is contemptuously likened to a stick, and his dramatic path had been by no means strewn with roses; yet he was fain to congratulate himself that it had not been beset by lions. He had been somewhat inclined to envy Rudolph Prusinowski the distinction and prosperity of his career; but just now it occurred to him that there were two sides to the picture. He rubbed his shoulder thoughtfully, and was glad to think that he was exposed to the assaults of no fiercer animals than those rampant tragedians who snubbed him when he played Horatio, and made light of him in Cassio, but who melted a little on their benefit nights, and treated him to beer.

CHAPTER II. THE SECOND TIME.

The Spindlecum people showed their appreciation of the British drama as represented by lion-taming by giving Herr Prusinowski a bumper. Whether it was the influence of the Cham of Tartary, or the Mikado, the Grand Duchess of Selzerwasserburg, or the local member, or the simple merits of the performance, is a moot question; but the Spindlecumians assembled in full force; and before the Herr had left the family tea-table to repair to the theatre, he received the pleasing intelligence that the crowd at the pit and gallery doors was half-way across the street.

'If we only go on like this for another year or so, Liz, I'll cut the profession,' exclaimed Herr Prusinowski cheerily, 'and start a theatrical public, somewhere on the Surrey side. It's a trying life is the wild-beast business.'

'And a dangerous life too, William,' said the little woman with a sigh.

(The renowned Rudolph's name in private life was William.)

'Not much of that, old girl. I'm more than a match for Robinson by this time. There isn't a move he's up to that I'm not down upon; and he's the cunningest beast that ever picked a bone. You're going into the front to-night, eh, Liz?'

'O yes, I shall get a seat at the back of the boxes. Mrs. Prodger's going with me. She's took her ticket, and paid for it, you know, William, like a lady.'

Mrs. Prodger was the Prusinowski's landlady, a ponderous matron of fifty, who had let lodgings to 'theatricals' for the last twenty years.

'Ta-ta, Liz, then; I'm off.'

'It's early, William. There's the

nd his Men—that'll last an
l a half, surely.'
n't believe it'll play an hour.
ght to know what my benefit
s are—all agog for the lions.
to have a look at the beasts
re begin, and I'm always a
rvous on my ben. Good-

was a mere conjugal excuse.
atre to a man bred at the
nes is his club. The Herr
l smoking his pipe in the
l-easy atmosphere of the
-room at the Queen's to the
elights of the domestic tea-
He had very little anxiety
is beasts. Joe Purdy, his
, a keeper who had served
renticeship with the great
ell, had the custody of them.

house was an excellent one.
es were not so well filled as
memorable night at Man-
which Herr Prusinowski
cribed to his friends; but
was a seething caldron of
y, the gallery looked like a
eager faces piled one upon
r up to the iron roof. The
nd his Men was performed
n dumb show, or seemed so
ough the leading tragedian
on the establishment was
himself hoarse in the charac-
rindoff, with a faint hope of
g a stray leaf from the crown
olive which would be cast
eet of the lion-tamer by and

loff did not bate a syllable of
or the minutest detail of
e business; not a stamp of
et boot, or a scowl of his
corked eyebrows; but the
the company, less enthusi-
camped their work to the
heir abilities, and the drama
d through in one hour ten
and seven seconds by the
r's chronograph.
came a stirring overture—
the 'Bronze Horse'—during which the audience cracked nuts and became momentarily more excited; and then the act-drop rose to slow music of a soul-appalling character, and revealed Brown, Jones, and Robinson picturesquely grouped in the stock primeval forest.

There was a pause. The house applauded vociferously. There was something stirring in the notion that these three unfettered beasts might leap into the pit at any moment. It was quite a pleasant sensation—especially for the gallery. Brown, who was elderly and decrepit, yawned and stretched himself out as if for slumber, with the air of having been untimely disturbed from his after-dinner nap. Jones, who was of a lively temperament, whisked his tail, and snapped at an imaginary fly. Robinson stared full at the audience, as if he really did understand and appreciate their plaudits.

The music quickened, broke into a stirring march, and then, at a fortissimo chord from the full orchestra, the lion-tamer bounded on to the stage—a striking figure, broad-shouldered and muscular, in close-fitting flesh-coloured raiment, a scarlet girdle round his waist, and a leopard's skin over his shoulder.

There was a good strong Sheffield knife in his belt, but he had no appearance of being armed.

His reception was tremendous. He stood bowing and moving his lips in vague murmurs, with an air of being quite overcome by his feelings, for nearly five minutes before he could begin his performance. His eyes wandered all round the house with the gaze of calculation, till they grew suddenly fixed, glaring at the stalls.

Now the stalls at the Queen's Theatre, Spindlecum, were a delusion and a snare. Spindlecum at its best was not an aristocratic town, and the Queen's was not the aristocratic

theatre of Spindlecum. Except on a mayor's bespeak or under masonic patronage, the stalls were rarely tenanted. But there they were, two long rows of partitioned seats, covered with dusty red cloth.

To-night there were three people in all the length and breadth of them—two faded-looking elderly women in opera-cloaks at one end, and in the middle, in a position that commanded every inch of the stage, a middle-aged man, with a cadaverous face, prominent light-gray eyes, and lank reddish hair, carefully dressed in full evening costume.

He sat in an attitude of extreme attention, with his arms folded on the back of the seat in front of him—he was in the back row—and his eyes fixed upon the lion-tamer. For the moment the sight of him seemed to turn Rudolph Prusinowski to stone. It was the man he had been talking of that day.

The cold sweat broke out upon his forehead; but he stamped his foot savagely, angry with himself for this folly, muttered an oath, and began his business with the lions—standing upon their backs, riding round the stage upon all three at once, leading them through a kind of dance movement, described in the bills as a set of quadrilles, with garlands of paper roses, and otherwise disporting himself with them, the red-haired man in the stalls watching his every movement and every movement of the animals breathlessly, and never stirring by a hair's-breadth from his attentive attitude, or turning his eyes away from the stage.

Then came the feature of the evening—a single combat between Herr Prusinowski and Robinson—who was described in the bills, by the way, as 'Moloch, the royal brindled lion, presented to Herr Prusinowski by one of the native princes of the Punjaub'—at the end of which the Herr dragged asunder the animal's jaws, and put his head into the red-hot-looking mouth.

To-night, in spite of that deadly terror which had come upon the Herr at the sight of that one detested spectator, everything went smoothly enough. Robinson, otherwise Moloch, kept his temper, suffered his jaws to be opened to their widest extent, and the tamer's head to repose upon his tongue as on a pillow for half a dozen seconds or so, and the curtain came down to vociferous applause; but when the *bénéficiaire* was called for, there was no response. The prompter found him leaning against one of the wings, white to the lips.

'Did you ever see a man tremble?' he asked, in a voice that shook so much as to be scarcely intelligible. 'If you want to see one, look at me.'

He was shaking in every limb, like a man stricken with ague.

'Why, what's the matter, cully?' asked the prompter, with more friendliness of tone than elegance of diction. 'They're calling for you like mad. You'd better go on.'

'I'm going, as soon as I can steady myself. I never neglect my business; but I've had a turn. I never thought I should come off the stage alive to-night.'

'Why, the animals were quiet enough.'

'Yes, as mild as lambs; but there's a man in front that's my evil genius. I never felt superstitious about anything else before—none of your ghosts or that kind of rot—but I've got my fancy about that man. He'd like to see me killed, and—he'll contrive to see it.'

'Prusinowski,' said the prompter, 'I couldn't have believed it of you. I thought you was a man of sense.'

But the prompter felt uncomfortable nevertheless. The human mind is especially open to uncomfortable sensations of this kind.

'Come, my boy,' he exclaimed,

losing temper.' This in al-
to the audience, who were
ring hoarsely for their favour-
You'd better go on.'
inowski wiped his damp fore-
ulled himself together, as it

right,' he said, and followed
ompter to the first entrance,
nt through the narrow open-
ich that functionary made for
pulling the heavy drop-scene
on one side. He went on,
his accustomed mechanical
d crossed the stage, to disap-
ith renewed bowings on the
e side. He was looking at
lls all the time. The man
ne.
se him!' muttered the lion-
'If he'd given me time to
my clothes, I'd have been in
f the house in time to see him
ut. I want to know who he
ant to know what he means.'
dressed hurriedly, tearing off
se-fitting garb, and shuffling
costume of everyday life any-
nd then went back to the
entrance before the curtain
en for the farce, and took
survey of the stalls, think-
just possible that his evil
had returned. But the man's
as empty. There were only
o dreary women, waiting
for one of the stalest inanest
nown to dramatic literature,
ming themselves with their
handkerchiefs.
Prusinowski went round to
lic doors of the theatre, and
bout there, with a vague idea
e man might be lingering
There was a large tavern just
the Queen's, where the audi-
re wont to refresh themselves
the stalls and boxes—with
and-soda. The Herr crossed
d by and by, went into the
l bar, still looking for his
d looking vainly.
le he was staring about him
a friendly hand tapped him on the shoulder.

'It was well over eighty, my boy,' said the voice of De la Zouche, upon whose youthful cheek still lingered some trace of the vermilion it had worn in the *Miller and his Men*, and whose upper lip was still stiff with the glue that had secured his horsehair moustache. 'Nearer ninety, Tiddikins tells me, and he knows how to reckon up a house with any man in the profession. I wish you joy.'

'Thank you, old fellow,' replied the lion-tamer vaguely. 'Yes, I think it's a good house.'

'Think! There's no room for thinking. The perspiration was running down their faces in the pit all through the *Miller*. The house was like a furnace; and uncommonly thirsty that kind of thing makes a man. The pongelow you sent in was very acceptable. I thought Fitz Raymond would never have taken his head out of the pewter. He's awful coally on his Grindoff—goes in a perisher, even when he can't hear himself speak for the noise in front. But I say, Prusi, how about the little supper you talked of?' This in an insinuating tone.

Prusinowski stared at him blankly for a moment, and then said carelessly,

'The supper—O, to be sure. I'd forgotten all about it.' The noble countenance of De la Zouche fell, and his open brow was overshadowed by a sudden gloom. 'But it's all right,' continued the *bénéficiaire*. 'It's ordered for twelve o'clock sharp. I ordered it on spec. I thought I should have a good house.'

'Prusinowski, you are a gentleman!' exclaimed the actor. 'You are one of Nature's nobility, sir, and daily contact with the brute creation has not degraded your lofty mind. At twelve sharp! I'll go home and put on a clean collar. I think you mentioned a goose?'

'Roast beef at the top, roast goose at the bottom,' said the Herr absently.

'It is a bird which, on the supper-table, I appreciate above any of the feathered tribe,' replied the walking gentleman. '*Au reservoir.*'

He departed, wondering at the silence and gravity of a man who could draw an eighty-pound house.

Herr Prusinowski left the tavern and strolled listlessly along the street. It was not quite eleven. He had a clear hour before him, in which he could do what he pleased with himself. Under ordinary circumstances he might have gone home, to have a few words with his 'little woman,' and make some amendment in his toilet; but to-night he hardly cared to face his wife. She would see that something was wrong, and question him. The impression that man's appearance had made upon him was a subject he did not want to talk about, not even with her. He turned out of the busy thoroughfare in which the Queen's Theatre was situated presently into a broad, quiet, old-fashioned-looking street leading down to the quay—a street of broad square red-brick houses of the Georgian era, grim and respectable, with a shop only here and there, and then a superior class of shop. It was a very quiet street at this time of night. The summer moon was shining full upon the broad pavement and empty road, and there was just a glimpse of moonlit water at the end of the street where it opened on the quay.

There was only one shop open at this hour, a tobacconist's at a corner. Prusinowski felt in his coat-pocket with a dim recollection of having allowed Mr. Fitz Raymond to empty his tobacco-pouch that evening, and then strolled across the road towards the tobacconist's shop. While he was in the act of crossing, a man came out of the shop and walked slowly away towards the quay. The lion-tamer recognised him at a glance and darted after him. It was the occupant of the stalls, a tall angular figure in the moonlight, with more or less the air of a gentleman.

It was an unjustifiable thing to do, of course; but Rudolph Prusinowski did not stop to consider the etiquette of the situation. He was resolved to accost this man. He would have done the same wherever he had met him.

'I beg your pardon,' he said, at the stranger's shoulder, 'I believe you were in front to-night in the stalls at the Queen's?'

The man turned and faced him. It was not a prepossessing countenance by any means, that long cadaverous visage, with the pale prominent eyes and lank sandy hair. The moonlight made it look more than usually cadaverous.

'Yes,' he said, 'I have been at the Queen's Theatre this evening. Dear me! you are the lion-tamer, I believe. This is really curious!'

He spoke in a formal deliberate way that was strangely irritating to Herr Prusinowski's nerves. These artists—even professors of the lowest arts—are apt to be sensitive.

'You have some kind of business with me, Herr Prusinowski?' the stranger said interrogatively, the lion-tamer standing for the moment staring at him like a newly-awakened sleep-walker, utterly lost and helpless.

'I—I wanted to ask you a question,' he said abruptly, rousing himself with an effort. 'This isn't the first time I've seen you. You took a private box at Manchester five years ago for my benefit.'

'I did,' replied the stranger. 'I congratulate you on the possession of an excellent memory, Mr. Prusinowski. You had a narrow escape that night at Manchester, I imagine. One of your animals turned restive.'

'Yes,' said the lion-tamer moodily, 'that brute Robinson cut up rough.

nerve, and he saw it. It
row escape—a disappoint-
you, wasn't it?'
e me, I hardly catch your

hought it was all over with
you? Come now, I want
our motive for coming to
at time—I want to know
ive for coming to see me

e?' repeated the stranger.
suppose the motive must
ntly obvious. People gene-
nd that sort of entertain-
l every sort of entertain-
earch of amusement.'
people perhaps—not you.
hat a man's face means,
ched yours, as close—well,
close as you watched me. It
face of a man that came
sed.'
eem to have a peculiar way
at things, Mr. Prusin-
plied the stranger, rubbing
close-shaven chin thought-
However, to be candid with
n somewhat interested in
g. I am an idle man,
My means enable me to
y much as I please and
lease, and a man without
is in a manner compelled
an interest for himself in
tside his own life. I am
ur of wild-beast shows.
s a man called Green—
have heard of him perhaps.
man Green perform seven-
ecutive times. I was pecu-
rested in him.'
said Prusinowski, 'I know
Green. He was killed—
a tiger that he'd made a
of money out of.'
s,' answered the stranger;
'

'rusinowski shuddered.
ght so,' he said; 'I thought
You've tasted blood.'
my honour that is a very
t way of putting it,' replied
the stranger. 'I look at these things entirely from an artistic point of view. I have heard it asserted that men of your profession always do meet with some fatal accident sooner or later. Since you push me so closely, I am bound to admit that has formed one element of interest for me in this kind of performance. I can understand the delight of the Roman people, from the emperor down to the humblest freedman, in their gladiatorial shows. I have a somewhat classical turn of mind, perhaps, and am proud to acknowledge a taste which connects me with a classic age.'

'I don't understand half that palaver,' said Herr Prusinowski rudely; 'but I trust in God I may never see your face again.'

'Really, now! but why?'

'Because you are a cold-blooded scoundrel, and you would like to see me killed.'

'My dear Mr. Prusinowski, that is a style of language which, if I were an ill-tempered man, I might resent. Happily I am not an ill-tempered man, so let it pass. You have no right to remark that I should like to see you killed by one of those brutes of yours. But if you *are* destined to meet your death in that manner, which it is to be hoped you are not, I freely admit that I should wish to be a spectator of the catastrophe. It would not make the smallest difference to you, and it would be highly interesting to me. Is this your way? No? In that case, good-night.'

He lifted his hat ceremoniously, and departed towards the patch of moonlit water at the end of the street, leaving the lion-tamer standing on the pavement, transfixed and brooding.

It was just as he had imagined—the man was an amateur of sudden death.

The supper at the Lion and La

public-house—a snug little hostelry five doors from the theatre, and much affected by the actors—was a gastronomic success, but not a social one. The fare was excellent. The giver of the feast ordered liquors on a liberal scale, and eatables and drinkables disappeared with a celerity cheering to witness. Yet the banquet was not a cheerful one. Nothing could rouse Prusinowski from the gloom that had fallen upon him. The actors did their utmost to beguile him into gaiety, with boisterous talk and laughter, racy anecdotes, and an unlimited amount of that humorous converse commonly known as 'chaff,' to which the theatrical mind is especially prone; but all their efforts failed. Once or twice he did make some faint show of rallying—gave a smart answer or two, threw a lobster claw at the tragic and dignified Fitz Raymond, when that great artist was engaged in argument, and pushed a stick of celery down the coat-collar of the absent-minded De la Zouche. But these were the feeblest spurts of gaiety, and by degrees the talk fell flat, and the revels, which under happier auspices would have lasted far into the summer dawning, broke up abruptly at a quarter past two.

Mr. Warbeck the prompter walked home with Tiddikins and De la Zouche, and told them what had happened after the fall of the curtain.

'Prusinowski's as good a fellow as ever breathed,' he said in conclusion, being thoroughly warmed through with gin-and-water. 'If he was my own brother, I couldn't like him better than I do. But I'm afraid there's something queer hereabouts.'

He tapped his forehead significantly.

'A loose slate,' said Mr. Tiddikins.

'A bee in his bonnet,' said Mr. de la Zouche.

CHAPTER III. THE THIR

It was three years la
life of the lion-tamer, an
performing for three nigl
a sea-coast town in the
England, a dreary little pla
whither he had strayed
rich manufacturing distri
his harvests were wont
plenteous—a dismal little
side which the sea seeme
more dolefully than by oth
a stony High-street, a da
fish-market, a beach of g
pebbles, and a long woo
stretching out to sea, an
always with slime and w
fish, and other refuse of
ocean.

Three years!—and yet o
fit night at Spindlecum He
owski had talked about r
his laurels in a year. H
been doing badly either;
had followed all his wa
but the human mind is el
estimate of money, and H
owski's notions of the f
ought to retire upon ha
with the passage of time.

'Another six months,
man,' he said, 'and I'l
beasts by auction, and tak
house,' which was his noti
and retirement.

'I wish it was to be t
William,' the little woma
sadly. 'I shall never kno
moment till you've done
animals.'

The first two nights at
this obscure northern sea
been tolerably successful.
tre was the mouldiest
perhaps that had ever bee
to public entertainment,
opened about once in tw
a week or so of transient
when some wandering s
dramatic firmament, m
speculative than his breth
ed his fortunes at Low

lity and gentry of
he was about to
hts only in a round
acters. Rarely as
emple were open,
owshore were not
remarkable unan-
e. It would have
if the drama were
ne seaport, the au-
ne to be subdued
r being generally
two or three dozen
smelling strongly
ng of boys, and a
and colour in the
women in service,
es and daughters.

drama, whether
gitimate, failed to
cceeded in doing.
ir houses—not the
ry, as represented
eer, whose estates
re, but who was
inhabit his great
erring a little box
ffed with rare old
curios; and the
pkeepers and their
maidens; the few
odging-house pro-
seafaring men and
e maids-of-all-work
the policeman off
nkling of farmers
s. It was late in
dreariest time of
r Prusinowski had
e in a speculative
ill up a blank week
gramme.

nearly full the first
well attended the
e third a consider-
as apparent. Still
ir house for Low-
a cheerful sprink-
very good gallery.
had a cavernous
. The box audi-
r middle-class of
people and lodging-

letters—had exhausted itself. Herr Prusinowski had brought a dramatic company of three with him to support the lions, and to eke out the evening's entertainment with a couple of farces or comediettas. This company consisted of a light comedian, a low comedian, and a comedy lady. The light comedian was the aspiring De la Zouche, who had blossomed from a walking gentleman into the popular provincial Charles Mathews—white hat, patent-leather boots, light-green trousers, cane, and rapid utterance. The performances began with *Delicate Ground*, and were to conclude with the *Secret*, a farce of an ancient and respectable character.

The lion-tamer, who was a spoilt child of fortune, had a supreme contempt for bad houses, and with a flagrant injustice was wont to wreak upon the innocent few who did come to see him that wrath inspired by the guilty many who stopped away. That is to say, he punished the scanty but admiring audience by scamping his performance, and depriving them of their just due. The dramatic company were accustomed to empty benches and a barren dress-circle.

The weather was against Herr Prusinowski on this particular evening. The north winds came howling across the German Ocean as if they were intent upon sweeping Lowshore from the face of the earth, driving a salt-flavoured sleet before them, which well-nigh blinded the adventurous pedestrian. The Herr expressed himself very forcibly about the weather, as he took leave of his family before setting out for the theatre. The comedietta was just over as he went in at the stage-door, and he had to dress in a hurry, struggling into his close-fitting raiment, and girding himself with scarlet and gold, while a feeble little orchestra of four—clarionet, flute, and two fiddles—played some old-fashioned country-dance tunes, what time the audience regaled themselves with prawns and

porter. The three lions looked tremendously big on the small stage, awfully real against the background of faded scenery. Robinson was out of sorts. He was sensitive upon the subject of weather, and had an especial aversion to high winds; perhaps some hereditary yearning for Libyan sands or Asia's burning sky —personally he could know nothing about either, having been born in Whitechapel—may have affected him at such times; at any rate the fact remained, cold or blusterous weather disturbed his leonine mind.

The feeble little orchestra made a great struggle to produce a soul-inspiring chord, and came out superbly, the second violin a trifle in the rear. Herr Prusinowski bounded on to the stage from a rocky set piece, and began his work rather languidly, handling Robinson with a certain amount of caution.

He had got through half his performance, and was leading the three lions round the stage on their hind feet, to the stirring music of the march in 'Blue Beard'—stirring even from those poor feeble players—when he heard the opening and shutting of a door at the back of the boxes. He looked up quickly. A gentleman in evening dress was seating himself deliberately in the centre place, a pale-complexioned man, with straight reddish hair. The lion-tamer's heart turned cold. It was the man he had seen at Manchester and Spindlecum, the man whose presence, by some morbid fancy, he associated with the idea of peril to himself. During the last three years he had been always more or less on the look-out for this man, and had never seen him—had begun to congratulate himself upon the probability that he would finish his public career without ever performing before him again; and here he was, in this remote seaport town, watching him with the same eager eyes and hungry face, watching as men watched the gladiators in old time, g their blood.

If he could have brough tertainment to an abrupt c that instant, he would have He would have willingly the people their money, and the night's profits to escape ing before that man. He inclined to plead sudden illn down the curtain with an but to do that would be t himself afraid of that man.

'D—n him!' he muttere self, 'he sha'n't see that I of him. Faster!' he calle the orchestra, 'faster and and as the music quickened, the animals with his whip.

Robinson, *alias* Moloch, the impertinence with a s roar, and from that moment Prusinowski lost his presen and lost his temper. He w mined to bate not one of l to demonstrate to that col wretch in the boxes that h afraid of him. He made th do more work than usual defiantly at that watchful f boxes all the while. The atre shook with applause rose to him, as the good were wont to say; the gal with bravoes.

All in a moment, at th the crowning feat which w clude the performance, th changed to an awful shout No one could say how it l the brute's movements were for human eyes to follo Prusinowski was lying on mawled and torn, the lion upon him.

The keeper and a couple scene-shifters rushed upon they dragged him from infuriated beast insensible ered with blood, and carri to the dressing-room, whe rival surgeons of Lowsh rushing in to him five min

ls. Surgery could do nothing; ibs were crushed to powder, and was a perforation of the lung hæmorrhage. He breathed sterously for about half an hour, and died, without one ray of return-consciousness.

'Strange,' the red-haired gentle- used to say afterwards, when old the story as a pleasant kind ing after dinner, and in some ner reflecting distinction upon himself; 'the poor devil was the second of his trade I saw killed, and I had come across him three times at long intervals in the course of my travels in the north. I take a considerable interest in that sort of thing; there's more excitement about it than there is in the drama. Prusinowski was a very respectable fellow; had saved money, I believe; and left his wife and children comfortably provided for.'

OUT ON THE PIER

Out on the pier at Whitby,
In the wild December day,
The chilly sunshine glinting down
Where the long reach glooms, and the tall cliffs frown,
And the great sea tosses gray.

Out on the pier at Whitby,
Watching the labouring sail,
Now dipping to the ocean's breast,
Now riding over the breaker's crest,
In the teeth of the rising gale.

Out on the pier at Whitby,
Hearing the mighty roar
As wind and wave roll on together,
In the stormy bridal of wintry weather,
To crash on the rocky shore.

Out on the pier at Whitby—
Well for the watcher there
Who has none of her dearest out at sea,
Where the sharp reef frowns, and the foam flies free,
And the fierce winds rage and tear.

Out on the pier at Whitby,
While the abbey up on the hill
Says, in its ruin'd beauty and might,
'Wait! for the longest and stormiest night
God's morning brightens still.'

S. K. PHILLIPS.

A ROGUE AND A VAGABOND

What! house do you say?—the Ship at Stock!
Why, there, I must ha' bin blind
Not to know it again: but 'tis years ago
Since I left these parts behind.
Here, master, bring us a pint out here,
If these good gents don't mind.

Look warmish, do I? And so would you,
If you'd only ha' come my track,
A-tramping it here from Grays to-day,
With this bundgun on yer back;
And I'm not so young as I used to be
When these gray hairs was black.

How long 'ave I bin on the road? Let's see:
'Tis a twelvemonth werry near
Since I first took up with the bundgun line
Along with this younker here;
But afore that I'd bin tramping about
Close upon forty year!

My best, is it? Thankee. Well, here's luck!
Yes, master, as you say,
'Tis rather a lengish time, no doubt,
Though it seems but the other day
That I was a little boy at home,
Out yonder by Rayleigh way.

Heigho! if I'd minded mother's words,
That was meant for my good alone,
I'd been a decent, well-to-do chap,
With boys and gals of my own,
Instead of a poor old homeless man,
A tramp and a vagabone!

Here, drink, lad!—Well, it wasn't to be:
I shouldn't ha' done for homely wear,
Treading your quiet mill-hoss round
To good gray hairs in an easy-chair:
I've a touch of gipsy-blood i' my veins
That pants for the sun and air.

Tramping it merrily east or west,
Town or country, or down or dale,
Beggar and gipsy, pedlar and thief,
Out of the workus into the gaol:
That was the life I lived and liked
When life was cheery and hale.

And yet there were moments too
When my heart was touch'd with ruth
At thought of the poor old mother at home,
And my wasted, shameful youth.
Ah, masters! there's nothing pays so well
As honest labour and truth.

I'd share my crust with a pal,
And my heart would often sigh
O'er a batter'd drab in a lodging ken
That had laid her down to die,
Babbling of mother, and youth, and home,—
'O mother!' was allus their cry.

Is the boy my own? Well, yes and no;
He is, and he isn't, mine.
Here, Will lad, go you and play a bit
On the green there in front o' the sign:
A fine little fellow for five-year old,
And as good and true as he's fine.

Poor Jaddie! I mind his mother well,
With her patient, wistful face;
A meek, blue-eyed, white slip of a girl—
A lady by birth and grace—
That was sought, and ruin'd, and throw'd
By a villain doubly base. [aside

Let's see,—'tis three year ago, or more,
Down there by the Hertford beat,
That I used to meet her fust on the road,
So shrinking, and pale, and sweet,
With her baby-boy that she loved so fond,
'Twould touch yer heart to see 't.

Dear heart! I could read the story well
That had steep'd her life in gall:
The bonny girlhood, dainty and sweet—
The love and the bitter fall—
A blighted name and a passionate flight,
And a tramp the more—that's all!

She'd a little box of ribbons and sich,
That was daintily ranged and pil'd;
And the country folks they took to her like,
She seem'd so gentle and mild;
And the women would buy a trifle or so
For the sake o' the pretty child.

But the boy look'd drooping, as well he might,
With their scanty food and pay,
As I'd notice when I stopp'd on the road
To give 'em the time o' day;
And the young 'un would know me, and prattle and smile
In his pretty baby way.

Yet she seem'd to be shy of the lot,
And afraid of the likes of we, [across,
And would creep o' nights to a shed to sleep,
Though we wouldn't have hurt her, yer see,—
Not even the women, and some o' them
Was as bad as bad could be.

Proctor, del. J. R. Buttershell, sc.

A ROGUE AND A VAGABOND.

1.

;—about that time
ı lush, I know—
ı an ancient pal o' mine,
ı Limping Joe;
as 'ow she'd bin in quod,
ger'd me like a blow.

ı fruit for her poor sick

t o' despair;
up, and giv' her a month
'k and fare;
it 'shocking depravity,'
like that 'air.

make me laugh, if it
so sad
ey deals wi' we,
better and struggling

ınning old hands goes

thinks with Puck i' the

hese mortals be!'

ı a little while,
er and wuss than afore;
she grow'd, poor soul,
m'd
r boy the more:
she was drawing near
ıerciful shore.

ı the Pedlar's Hact just

ed such a deal o' fuss;
ıad the naming o't,
'd the title thus:
ning Men into Thieves,
nto wuss!'

llus a thief,
l stop their bread,
all into being good'—
e hact's to be read:
hink that your Mister

off his 'ed!

them there parleyment

for the poor,
no more about us, man,
on that 'ere door:
through, and they seem

nore and more.

ı a Christian land,
preach and kneel,
ime for a fallen man
nest meal!—
must wonder and weep

caper and reel!

When I heard as they'd stopp'd her rounds,
And writ 'convicted' agin her name,
I felt a choking like i' the throat,
And my heart was all aflame.
Ah me, there was only the workus now,
Or a woman's crowning shame!

Well, I'd come one bitter night dead-beat
To a lodging-crib I knew,
And gather'd about the kitchen-fire
I found a motley crew;
They was singing and swearing, and going on,
As only trampers do.

I'd sat me down in a weary mood,
Sick o' their oaths and lies,
When the missus—she was a rough 'un was Moll—
Come in with the tears in her eyes,
And pray'd 'em, if they was women and men,
To try and stop the noise:

For there was a poor young stranger gal
In the room just overhead,
That wasn't likely to last the night,
Least so the doctor had said;
And they wanted to keep her quiet, poor soul,
And to coax her boy to bed.

They was still at once, and I foller'd her out,
With a sudden tremble and thrill:
'For God's sake, missus,' I whisper'd hoarse,
'Show me this woman that's ill;
For I think I know her of old, yer see,—
She and her little Will!'

'Come and see her, and welcome,' she said;
'For perhaps before she goes,
It might be a comfort to her like
To see a face that she knows.'
Poor drunken Moll, she'd a nook in her heart
For a stricken sister's woes. * *

—Yes, it was she—the poor wrong'd gal,
Once pure, and bonny, and bless'd—
With a far-off look in the great blue eyes,
Soon to close in their long last rest;
And dank and dishevell'd the golden head
Should have lain on a mother's breast.

There was women about her—slatternly drabs,
The lowest o' the low—
One tenderly bathing her poor hot head,
One walking to and fro,
Hushing the boy, who knew me agen,
And begun to laugh and crow.

She look'd up then, and saw me, and smiled—
Such a weariful smile and drear—
Then turn'd her face to the wall with a sigh
That it wrung my heart to hear;
And her white lips mutter'd the old, old cry,
'O mother! O mother dear!'

'Poor soul!'—'twas Moll that whisper'd the words—
'That's how she's bin all through:
She thinks o' nought but her mother and boy,
But I dunno what we can do;
For she'll tell us nothing about herself,
Nor where are her friends, nor who.

When the parson ask'd her name, she sobb'd:
"I've no name now to own;
You see what I am, sir,—a sinful girl,
That looks to Christ alone,
And prays Him to shield her dear, dear boy,
When his mother's dead and gone!"

That's all we knows about her, yer see,
Except that she come to the door,
Dead-beat and sinking, a week ago:
But perhaps you can tell us more.'
But I'd nothing I could tell 'em, you know,
Save what I've told afore.

Yet my heart went forth to the poor sick gal—
The weariful golden head—
And I fell on my knees afore them all,
Beside her dying bed;
And it seem'd as if words was given me,
And this was what I said:

'My lass, I can read your story, I think,
And I pity you from my heart:
There, I ain't goin' to ask who you are, poor child,
So you needn't tremble and start!
'Tis enough for me that you're lying here,
And that you and your boy must part.

But God 'll take care o' the boy, He will,
Though the road look dark and grim;
And He'll take you, too, to His pitying arms,
Where no tear those eyes shall dim;
And death will be but the gate o' life,
If you only trust in Him:

For His mercies are abo
works—
'Tis true, for He tells us s
And He gives to the heavy-
From their load o' care a
And though our sins as scar
He can make them white

Will you trust your pretty l
Ah! you shudder, and we
I know I'm an old, stain'
man,
That has throw'd his life
But I too had a mother onc
Who taught her child to

I'll shield him, as a mother
From sorrow, and sin, an
And the Master I know will
With His guiding mercy
And the honest bread I e
boy
Shall sweeten and bless m

It must rest with you, and
The choice shall be wholl
But if you can trust the bo
Only make me a sign.'
She smiled, and tried to give
And I knew that the boy

She died next day, with a p
In Him who alone can sa
And I carried her orphan
arms
To his mother's parish gr
They that shed the only tea
Was a drab and a trampi

The parson offer'd to take t
He said as my heart was
But mine was hardly the s
For a child to be consign
He was right, maybe, but I
trust,
And up and spoke my mi

'Look here, sir,' I said, 'I'
out—
Low, lazy, and drunken
But I mean, please God, to
For the sake of this littl
For I feel he was sent to h
The life I've wasted and

So I took the boy and I we
And I tried to keep my
I was helpless like o' mysel
But the Master saw and
And in teaching them baby
My own poor heart was

ce as a hostler fust,
tham in Linkunsheer,
gabone mood come back, and
liked
to be allus near;
work'd on till I'd saved
ough
his horgan here.

o' the regular lodging-kens,
lecent houses lie;
saving a trifle, don't yer
e,
tice him by and by.
it lonely at fust, no doubt,
Master 'll still be nigh.

And so we jogs on, Willie and I:
I carries the horgan and plays,
And the browns fall fast in his little hat,
While the women fondle and praise:
God has been very good to send the boy
To comfort the old man's days.—

There, I must have tired you out, I'm afraid,
With my wearisome yarn and drawl;
But 'tis good to open yer heart sometimes,
And I'm glad I happen'd to call.
Come, Will, we must make for Chumpsford, lad;
So good-night, gentlemen all!

EDWIN COLLER.

THE SLIP CARRIAGE

BY WALTER THORNBURY

HE WHITE UMBRELLA.

asant transformations were
ice around him.
procession of strange lit-
res passed the artist as he
at the edge of the Blener-
ods, under his white um-
They came one after the
so many deputations from
ngdom, yet they failed to
to any interest.
the third week of rather a
, and the little amber-
eaves of the oak were still
mped, crumply condition,
adly-packed clothes of the
l at a watering-place. The
ered with a reddish down,
of a deer's hide, were un-
eir curious globes, and un-
ose crozier-shaped stems
h the medieval jewellers
derived some of their de-
he lime-leaves, limp, and
quisite transparent green,
the wind; the sharp tufts
h were unfolding in the
air; the chestnut was expanding its fans from a dozen places among the sun-dappled beech trunks. The blackbirds sang their frank bold songs, and the thrushes fluted their more varied and subtle capriccios on the old themes of love, hope, and spring. The cuckoo too, that strange African exile enamoured of his own name, kept repeating his one idea; and from the larches on the next hill another cuckoo answered like an echo.

But the fairy deputations sent to cheer the expectant lover, let us not forget them; for any one but Frank Probyn would have taken pleasure in observing them. First came a little gold-green beetle, who, after staring a moment with almost scientific interest at a twig near Probyn's easel, suddenly darted off at a railway pace into a hole among the grass, like a City man late for a business appointment. Next wavered by a great coloured butterfly, who skimmed by swift as a swallow, then fell coquettishly musing over a little blue flower on which it alighted, with quivering wings, and a bearing

much grander than your mere low-born white papillon, whose home is a cabbage, and who, from sheer light-headed inadvertence, flutters straight into a hedge-sparrow's mouth. Presently, in fiery and vicious haste, like a little diabolical estafette, trotted across the path one of those insects called by country children the devil's coach-horse; and to him succeeded a water-wagtail, that quickest and daintiest of birds, who, with a little lady-like run and a flutter, snapped up and swallowed Apollyon's off-leader, and then shivered, as if it had slightly disagreed with him. Then a nightingale in the brake gave one of those low delicious gurgling shakes which such birds practise sometimes, when the wood is quiet by day; and a goldfinch, with a glimmer of colour, dropped from a slender beech-bough overhead to one ten feet lower, while it still vibrated and quavered a little song of welcome and warning, and was off again. A few minutes later a harmless green snake moved in the warm grass of the nearest bank, and a rabbit scudded over a narrow track that led up into the wood.

And all this time the great brown-eyed cows watched the artist from the meadow, as they munched among the gilt cups and the clover, not yet foaming with the big daisies of June; and the chaffinch, 'pink-pinking' among the opening May-blossom, eyed him with little pert head on one side, as a citizen of Lilliput might have regarded Gulliver.

But still stolidly, almost savagely, Probyn smoked and painted on, heeding no fairy messages, his quick eyes caring for no spring sights, his ears heeding not the unstudied music in that May wood, whose trunks bothered him, and whose foliage his right hand was slow that day to express. There was Nature singing, dancing, fluttering, talking with a thousand nimble merry tongues, of hope, and love, and spring, caring nothing for him and all his troubles, and as careless as his colourman whethe Blenerhasset ever became Ah, selfish Nature, selfi boundless happiness of sp result of which agreeable was, that our artist strod the ground ivy, and dippin in the brook that flowed c edge of the wood, just to spi sponged-out half his morni in a huff. Then he viciously a load of bird's-eye into root, lit it with a fusee th as loud as a saloon pistol, little firebrand into a clum innocent dog-violets that g foot of a beech three yard smoked sullenly for ten mi cept once when he paused t awake from dreams of th seemed to do him good, b had once sung it to Harry- —at a certain moonlight w when they were down in D at that mutual friend's, w had first met, and where I had, from behind the blu Harry's eyes, shot a she keenest arrows at Capta Probyn of the Scinde Lig till his heart was stuck thr through like a pincushio violent fit of that temporar called love had superven most alarming form.

'I'm a blamed idiot, tha am, by Jo,' said the amat at last, 'and as great a duf lived. What am I doing, about here, sending Har by the fourteenth cousin of and no more chance of moment with her than I seeing the Emperor of C know what it'll be; that old fool of a father, and that o making mother, will tease her till she marries that young baronet, just to be q what is worst of all, that f Tresham, who was to help evidently not been asked do my luck; and they'll go

all news of me from her, till she'll think I've forgotten her, and then she'll marry in despair. Curse the tree! there's a fresh light on it every three minutes. There, you beast; out you go! that'll teach you; and this tobacco's as damp as old boots. By Jo, if I haven't half a mind to go straight back to India, and get polished off in some native affair right away. But, hush! By Jo, here's some of the Blenerhasset people coming!'

Yes, indeed there were. Two or three guests at the house above, led by the fussy and imperious Mrs. Blenerhasset, had suddenly appeared on a path that wound down through the wood to the sloping open meadows on the edge of which Probyn had planted his white tent. It was possible that object had attracted them, and that they were making for it.

'By Jo,' said the artist, at once roused from his stolid sullenness, 'here's a go! But I'll be ready for you, my old girl.'

He had evidently come prepared for such possible emergencies, for in a moment he had snatched from a havresac he wore a false beard and whiskers of the late Bloomfield-Rush pattern, and had slipped them nimbly on, disguising his eyes also with an enormous pair of green blinkers. Then he buttoned up his gray shooting jacket and turned up the collar, and turned up his trousers. From a handsome young officer he had shrunk up in a moment into a miraculous old German Jew. Ah, Frank Probyn, those pleasant private theatricals down in Devonshire, when you were always the lover, and Harry the young *ingénue*, were not lost upon you. You did not look a very natural Jew; but then who says the stage has anything to do with nature?

Down they came, like wolves on the fold. Mrs. Blenerhasset in purple and gold; the young simpering baronet doing the agreeable to Harriet, who looked fresher and prettier than ever, but rather sad; the obsequious little husband of the Blenerhasset, nervously anxious to please the young baronet; a sharp, cross-looking, young-old governess; and last of all, to Probyn's delight, though all his eyes were for Harry, came Tresham, with a pretty cousin of Harry's, who seemed decidedly to enjoy his good-natured jokes and rattling happy-go-lucky conversation.

Mr. Blenerhasset, stopping to look at the strange creature's sketch, with double eyeglass superciliously held up, exclaimed in a loud voice, aimed at the young baronet,

'How extraordinary it is that people can sit about for days in these woods of ours, making sketches which are always so excessively green. I don't see things so green; do you, Sir George?'

'No, it ith vewy gween, awfully gween,' said the young man of fortune, simpering as if he had really said a good thing.

'Come here, Sir George,' said the alderman, from a point some yards farther on. 'Come here, and I'll show you where the Marquis's shooting forms a sort of promontory, as it were, and abutts on the Blenerhasset estate.'

That moment, as Mrs. Blenerhasset was turning to join her husband and Sir George, Probyn twitched Tresham by the coat.

'Don't cry out,' he said. 'It is I—Frank. Keep Harry back to have a moment with me, and lead on the old birds and that fool of a baronet cub. Why didn't you answer my note?'

'It must have crossed me—never got it. Fancy you here! What a make-up! I'll send Harry back to you. Send word to me where you're putting up. Thought you must be down here. They're going to have a fancy ball up there to-morrow evening. I can get you in as a friend; but Harry will tell you all about that.

I'll send her back. Good-bye, old man; good-bye. I'll keep them all away, especially that old dragon of a governess. It will all go well yet with you and Harry. Keep your pecker up; never say die.'

With which profound philosophical consolation, Tresham darted up the path through the wood with the speed of a deer, just as the last glimpse of Mrs. Blenerhasset's purple silk train swept round the corner tuft of fern.

A moment or two that seemed years, and a little person, like a civilised fairy in shepherd's-plaid silk, came gliding down between the larch stems furtively, both little hands stretched cautiously before her, to press back the soft green-tufted boughs. A moment more, and she was in the arms of the artist, who whipped off his beard to kiss her. 'Dear! darling! my own!' were words frequently uttered during the next three minutes; and then, holding both her tiny hands, he looked into her eyes, as if he could read the future there.

'O, do take off those horrid green spectacles, Frank,' said Harriet. 'They make you look like a monster in a pantomime.'

'The green-eyed monster? Harry darling, I warn you I sha'n't let you go again. Let's elope now, and leave the cruel mother, the obdurate father, and the spoony baronet of boundless wealth.'

'Ah,' said Harriet, whose hand was buried in the thick brown hair that curled over Frank's forehead: 'now, if it was the good old times, your charger would be feeding close by, and you'd call it, and mounting me before you, sound your horn, and gallop me off to your mother's castle. Wouldn't you, Frank?'

'Wouldn't I just, Harry! and if that booby baronet tried to stop me, I'd give him a prod in the ribs with my rapier, and teach him not to interfere again between a Probyn and the lady of his heart. I
his beauty, the humbug!'

'But, Frank dear, we're
nonsense. What I came for
tell you that Ned and I s
must come to this ball. It's
ball, and he has got a dress
Mind, I've set my heart up
coming, and you're down for
dances.'

'I'll go in for it, whatev
pens. But, Harry, mind y
run off with me if they pr
much more about that barone
or some day you'll be consenti
sheer worry.'

'Frank, how dare you tal
ever marrying any one but
'O, I don't know what t
stant worry might not do.'

'Frank, you'll make me
and I'll never kiss you agai
'You could not be angr
tried, Harry.'

'Ah, you'll see some day,
mustn't stop.'

'One more kiss.'

'There! Now, you've h
enough kisses. Good-bye,
good-bye. O, good gracious
Miss Venables coming ba
me, and you've got your be
'Like my luck,' groaned
'It is too late; she saw me
see those green eyes of her
on me. You must coax h
Harry. I don't like the o
bit; but perhaps she may
noticed, after all.'

It was too true. There
Venables stepping gingerly
tween the young larches, wi
donic simper on her pin
mouth. She eyed with a col
the artist, whose beard was
and green spectacles adjust
'Your mamma has sen
look for you, Miss Blenerhas
carriage is waiting at th
Your mamma is rather in
as she promised to be at
Lodge by four.'

With one look at Frank,

his hat, Harriet de-
nk followed her with
he last glimpse of gray
ut of sight. He then
ite tent with a groan,
cked up his easel, and
o the town.

nt Harriet got round
she began to try her
ers on the stern Miss

k who was that extra-
on?' asked Miss Vena-
'and what a very re-
rd!'

ve the dragon a glance
allow's flight, yet pene-
fle bullet. She saw in
t Miss Venables knew
ice decided on the line
e stopped and threw her
he governess's neck.

me very dearly, and I
u mustn't tell mamma;
vill you? for you're a
eature. I know it is
seeing him like this,
ing was accidental, and
narry me to that dread-
e.'

bles thought of the pos-
of silence, for Harriet
a handsome cheque
er only a few days be-
thought she saw her
hing like half a year's
ould be easy to betray
later stage.

rself in my position,' she
Harriet, and remember
esponsibility which de-
. If your mamma only
connived at such an in-
ould instantly lose my
poor friendless woman
ust disregard all senti-
gs, and act on a rigid
'

v she was yielding, and
th an outburst of girl-

t tell, dear Miss Vena-
? It wasn't my fault;
and who knows when we shall meet again? Besides, you know you had no share in our meeting. Ah, you dear good creature, I see you will keep my secret.'

II. THE FANCY BALL.

HARRIET was watching every one who entered with the deepest interest. There was no sign of Frank yet. One or two Turks, a dozen dominoes, an Elizabethan courtier arm in arm with a stout Ophelia, an overwhelming Lady Macbeth in black velvet, and several Charles the Second courtiers had arrived. The baronet was a crusader, Mr. Blenerhasset was strutting about in a George the Second dress, and Mrs. Blenerhasset was grand and impressive as Queen Anne. Harriet looked very graceful and pretty as Juliet, and Ned Tresham made a very manly cavalier officer. As for Miss Venables, a tinsel crescent over her forehead, and a gilt bow which she held in her hand, sufficiently indicated to the world her dignified impersonation of Diana—'huntress chaste and fair.'

The first dance was just over, the music of which had been grotesquely broken in upon by the roll of wheels up the drive, and the jarring of steps, and every moment fresh groups of county people were arriving.

'It ith pothitively a motht exhilawating thight, and weally vewy enchanting,' said the young baronet to Harriet, whom he closely blockaded.

'Yes, the mixture of colours and strange dresses is very pretty; but I really don't see that as yet any one even attempts to sustain his part.'

'It is awfully hard, mind you, Miss Blenerhasset. I can't keep going about all night cwying, "Godfwy de Bullyon! huwah for Wichard Cœur de Lion!" That would never do, you know; and thith tin armour clatters so when you dance—it ith weally awful.'

'Then don't dance.'

[illegible] looking forward [illegible] Berkshire! [illegible] really a [illegible]

[illegible] cousin Ned [illegible] the Empire. His [illegible] moustaches [illegible] He had been [illegible] her mamma, who was smiling [illegible] the new arrival. [illegible] had a [illegible] and his manners were [illegible] of the old school. He spoke in admirable broken English, from which he never lapsed.

'Who is that gentleman who arrived with young Mr. Tresham?' asked Lady Harlech of Queen Anne.

[illegible]

[illegible] Harriet [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] was all Harriet could do to prevent [illegible] a cry of astonishment, but she did do so; and as they revolved past Tresham and the [illegible] his partner, Tresham gave them a look of recognition and of triumph. Mr. and Mrs. Blenerhasset were charmed with the scion of the French aristocracy, his affability, and his condescension. Every time he danced with Harriet, Mrs. Blenerhasset pointed him out to all the dowagers round her as a pattern of aged elegance. The baronet was mad with envy.

'I positively must introduce him to you, my dear Mrs. Lissomer,' said Mrs. Blenerhasset to one of the richest and most influential neighbours.

'I should like it above all things, my dear Mrs. Blenerhasset. My girls are dying to dance with him.'

'But I don't see him anywhere now,' said Mrs. Blenerhasset.

'O, I'm sure Miss Venables will go and find him for us—of course you will, there's a dear thing. I think he and Mr. Tresham must be in the conservatory.'

Of course Miss Venables would; and off Diana, ever blooming, young, and fair, bounded. They were not, however, in the conservatory; but the conservatory doors, that opened on the terrace, were bright with moonshine, and into the moonshine Diana very appropriately went.

Like the ghost of an elderly Diana seeking her Endymion, Miss Venables stole along the terrace, skulking in the shadow cast by the house. Gliding as softly as a weasel across a broad blanched surface of moonshine, she stole into the shadow of a huge stone urn full of flowers.

'O, don't be angry with me, Frank, dear,' said a soft gentle voice. 'They are all against me here, and I had no one to tell I have given my heart already, except Miss Venables.'

'What, that old cat!' said a manlier voice. 'Hang her.'

If Lynch law could have been instantaneously effected by any temporary compact with king Apollyon on any of amiable Miss Venables' enemies, it would have gone very hard with Frank Probyn; for Miss Venables' lean fingers clutched at the urn, and the tinsel crescent on her scanty hair trembled with rage.

'Don't say that, Frank,' answered the low sweet voice; 'she's a dear good old thing.'

'Old, indeed!' internally groaned the listener; 'very little older than you, you vain creature!'

-And would give her very life
ke you and papa and mamma
s.'
onsense; she would not give a
f her chignon. She'd sell all
ave told her for a sovereign.'
ll chignon him, I'll sovereign
muttered the fair queen of
just then behind a cloud. 'I'll
your game, my young man!
of young fools!'
doubt Miss Venables fully in-
l to win the odd trick at this
nt. She had long before this
ed to sell her secret to the best
, and had indeed thrown out
l preparatory hints to the
baronet, whom they alarmed
at enlightening. The conver-
, after several whispers and a
sound as of kisses, was re-
l.
hey hardly speak to me. Papa
s and bites his lips, and mamma
not to hear what I say. O
, I am so miserable; and they
me like a thief. Mamma
t is killing papa.'
illing! rubbish! He looks as
as a sand-boy. They'd say
ing to turn you from me.
, I see it has come to this—
ust elope, and get married at
at Gretna.' (It was some
ago.) 'It is only nine miles
here to Reading, and if we start
ur before the ball breaks up,
n catch the first train to Lon-
and the next after we start for
orth.'
ere were several moments' si-
then Harriet said plaintively,
there no other way, Frank?'
one.'
one?'
one; either that, or they will
you abroad, and we may never
again.'
es, I will go,' sobbed Harriet.
ould rather die here, as I sit
y you, Frank, than marry that

he fly will wait for us at the
park gate at half-past two. We will meet here.'

A kiss (several) ratified the agreement. Miss Venables stole back into the house. An hour later, Tresham made his way through a crowd of Venetian senators, Spanish cavaliers, general officers, and Waverleys, to his old friend the Vicomte, who was chatting to two blonde sisters who were dressed as Spanish donnas.

'Frank,' said he, drawing him apart, 'look out. That spiteful old cat of a governess has been playing Harry and you false. She came into the supper-room and began whispering to Mrs. Blenerhasset; and I heard your name and something about half-past two. The old bird seemed to colour, and nearly dropped off her perch.'

'The deuce!' said Frank.

'Now what you have to do is to start just half an hour earlier, and let the horses have it the whole way. I'll contrive to get Harry out on the terrace, and start her without being suspected. O you romantic beggar, what a Romeo-and-Juliet business you're making of it! And when they discover it all, won't it be like young Lochinvar, and the old game over again? By Jove, if I wasn't afraid of the matrimonial lottery, if I wouldn't whip off that pretty girl in the sea-green silk, and race you all the way to Gretna. Mind, at two to the moment. They'll watch Harry as cats watch mice; but I'll make a diversion to get you off.'

'I am afraid it is all up now,' said Probyn. 'You're a deuced good fellow. I know you would do all you could to help me and Harry, but I shall never be able to get off with Harry. I am standing here like a fellow on the drop waiting for the bolt slipping, expecting every moment old Blenerhasset will send one of his flunkeys and politely tell me to get off the premises.'

'Nonsense, cheer up, old boy,'

said his good-natured rattling friend. 'I allow that old dragon of a governess has played you false, but remember she did not see you, and she doesn't know that you are here in masquerade. She won't know you; keep on disguising your voice and it'll be all right. The old bird has just been inquiring after that agreeable old colonel, and she doesn't know you from Adam.'

'But how will Harry be able to slip away? Her mother keeps her by her side, and never takes her eye off her. She has already declined two dances. O, it is all up, Ned.'

'Don't be chicken-hearted, Frank, and I'll pull you through, as sure as my name is Ned Tresham. I tell you I've got a plan in my head that'll do the trick. You take Mrs. Blenerhasset down to supper, and when you are well fixed there, I'll contrive something that will give you a good chance of slipping off with Harry; but mind you look sharp for the moment, and don't miss your chance.'

* * * * *

They had just sat down to supper, and Frank was wondering what stratagem Tresham would employ, and whether it would be successful, when there came a shout and a rush through the door leading from the hall into the supper-room, and two spiteful pampered little terriers of Mrs. Blenerhasset's darted in, pursued by two smart, strong, pugnacious terriers of Tresham's, and followed by him and one of the page boys. In a moment the dogs joined battle in the centre of the room, and were at it tooth and nail, yelping, barking, and growling like so many mad things. The page-boy, in his eagerness to part them, knocked down a tray of champagne glasses; a footman, running in answer to Mrs. Blenerhasset's screams and Tresham's cries of mad dog, leaped up and knocked a bottle of sparkling moselle from a footman's hands; he, recoiling, struck another effervescent bottle from another footman. Up

started the guests; th
screamed and jumped on cl
or two on the table, to the
tion of jellies and the con
custards. Never was such
roar ever raised in a sup
before. As for the govern
one foot in a bowl of lobs
and another in a Strasbur
stood like an Andromeda s
at the approach of the sea
It was at this moment that
de Longjoomo, with Harri
arm, stole through the
tory into the garden. Th
ham, doubled up with laught
them with some cloaks, sh
a bonnet procured from
maid whom he had bribe
ten minutes more Frank
affianced were rattling o
moonlight at full gallop for

III. THE SLIP CARRIA

At nine the next mor
first express darted into
with its usual mad triump
first-class carriage at the e
train, pale and sleepy, we
Probyn and Harriet Ble
They were safe now; they
have well been missed for
and that hour would have
any pursuers catching a
London till two or three h
A few hours more and they
at Carlisle, and then hey fo
Sitting back in their litt
compartment, Frank and
shrank from public observ
with her veil down, he wit
paper concealing his face,
now washed off, the long g
taches and bushy gray
removed. Occasionally—
say, once in every five min
—he leaned forward and p
hands in his, and she ret
mute expression of love w
of entire trust, which wo
almost softened the hear
Miss Venables herself. Th
one else in the carriage,

inutes behind the
ıot very well excite
from the world at
the circumstances
le. They had paid
hem keep the car-
ı, and he took good
ren the most deter-
traveller. If any
arriage for Pres-
ırther on Preston;'
ked for a Penrith
ılandly, 'This car-
only.'
ling, we are safe
:. 'A few hours
be one.'
ınt a party came
he carriage next
ırs, to their horror,
rn voice say,
ot here: this next
ır us.'
ma'am,' said the
tleman is suffering
·e. Must be alone

ned Mrs. Blener-
as. 'Come along,
en's sake, don't go

narrow go,' said
ed Harriet's hands
ıbserved that they
what shall we do

lost,' was the tear-
are going straight
.'
silent, looking at

ed you,' said Tres-
nent looking in at
ε, come out, there's
for you. I told
· for the two next
king carriage, and
now. Quick, out
only one chance.'
d.
-out with Harry;
ance. I'll pull you

Frank collected his wraps, and the two lovers obeyed Tresham's emphatic order like two children. They were in despair, and they succumbed at once to the stronger will and final resolve of Tresham. A moment more, and they were ensconced in the last carriage of the train. The last truck-load of luggage had just darted down the platform; the last arrival of scared-looking passengers hurried through the already closing doors of the booking-office. The last newspaper was sold, the last glass of sherry drained, the last ticket nipped, the last door slammed, the white flag waved; the bell rang, the train gave a sluggish jolt forward, then conquering rapidly the *vis inertiæ*, gradually gathered itself up, and panted on with its usual untiring vigour, wrapped in clouds of its own victorious breath.

'And what good is this, now we have done it?' said Frank, doleful enough. 'Here we are in the same train with Harry's father and mother, who are pursuing us.' He spoke low, for there was a guard in the carriage reading a paper.

'What a curious carriage this is, Frank! It is not like any I have seen before,' said Harriet. 'Why, it's three sides glass, like a coupé in a diligence! Why did you bring us here, Ned? I know by that look of your eyes you had some meaning in it. See how he is laughing, Frank.'

Frank looked, and shook off his despondency, and his eyes brightened.

'Why, this is a slip carriage!' he cried.

The guard looked up over his paper, caught some impression of the group, and said to the lady,

'Yes, ma'am, this is a slip carriage; we slip at Dunsford.'

'There's no danger, is there?'

'Danger, miss! none in the world; you'll go off as easy as slipping a greyhound.'

'I see it all, Ned; and you're the best fellow in the world!' cried Frank,

[illegible] Harry,
[illegible] all right:
[illegible] to
[illegible] found you
[illegible] Tresham.
[illegible] starting for
[illegible] wed
[illegible] If we
[illegible] not
[illegible] ting
[illegible] I took
[illegible] different
[illegible] was too
[illegible] London
[illegible] changed if
[illegible] in for
[illegible] and
[illegible] I feel
[illegible] Harriet, ling-
[illegible] as if they were
[illegible] gun.
[illegible] ss,' said
[illegible] w
[illegible] train in
[illegible] for
[illegible] telegraph
[illegible] ight
[illegible] gh
[illegible] of
[illegible] dark
[illegible] ome-
[illegible] across
[illegible] the rail-
[illegible] grass in
[illegible]
[illegible] low.
[illegible] slacking
[illegible] guard,
[illegible] and hand
[illegible] window:
[illegible]
[illegible] kept dragging at
[illegible] was a huge
[illegible] slip at
[illegible]
[illegible] is going,' said
[illegible] her eyes.

'Two minutes, miss.'

The guard pulled and tugged at the chain as if he had hooked a huge fish and was playing it, trying to tire it out. All at once he gave a grand drag, as if he had struck the fish, and let go the hook. Whiz-z-z. Away, like a bullet from a gun, as if indeed he had pulled a trigger and discharged the train at Dunsford; away with a rush and a whir of freedom the train darted off on its war-path. This moment it swayed before the looker-on, the next it had grown smaller; smaller now, smaller, a speck—out of sight! Onwards but slowly after it, though the speed seemed scarcely to slacken, the slip carriage swept along the rails; till, a little before Dunsford, its motive power gradually lessened. Eventually worn out, and jolting down to the speed of a mere market-cart, the carriage glided into Dunsford Station as quietly as if it had been driven by an old farmer, and drawn by a sober old pony.

The slip carriage had saved them. Great was the delight of Harriet when she found herself safe, and loud the gratitude of Frank. Tresham, by a judicious telegram to Carlisle, explaining that he had been accidentally left behind at a station where he had got out to get a glass of sherry, brought the worthy but not astute Blenerhasset back to London by the next train.

Immediately on which, Frank and Harry, who had been quietly stopping at the house of a married friend of Tresham's, slipped off to Gretna, and were there quietly married—thanks to the clever use of a slip carriage. The Blenerhassets were soon reconciled to their new son-in-law, who is already pronounced likely to be made the next Associate of that generous and receptive body, the Royal Academy.

NOT JUST YET

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'JACK PUGH'S LEGACY,' ETC.

TEEN years ago, London was a h jollier place in every way than now. It had an individuality of wn then; its big hotels were unt, its Houses of Parliament were nished: it was just a big, brown, r city, with a splendid river run- slap through it. For it had a r then, with shores and noble ges; now it has but a stone gh, with iron drain-pipes across One rode on the top of buses , or darted about in hansoms; , I declare, when I visit London, end all my time in a coal-cellar, re there is an escape of gas, and re all the hot cinders from the hen fire are emptied,—I mean Metropolitan Railway.

Fifteen years ago I was in Lon- , living on a slender pittance, and h troubled in the matter of din- . As a rule I dined in the mid- of the day, on a chop sent in by ighbouring publican, and made with bread-and-cheese and beer ight. But there were times when soul craved more luxurious liv- Those times generally coin- d pretty accurately with the ad- of quarter day, and then one ld go in for a cut of Simpson's ton, or, if more reckless, for a er at the Wellington, at that just opened *vice* 'Crockford's.' undays were the worst days for er arrangements. By breakfast- at noon, indeed, one avoided the ssity of any luncheon; but at t five o'clock a desperate craving ld come over me, a gnawing ure in the stomach would cease- y cry for food. Frequently, I ess, an empty purse coincided with an empty stomach, and the vulture cried in vain; but sometimes one had a few shillings in one's pocket, and then, even then, the problem was a difficult one—where to dine on Sunday.

I went often on such occasions to an underground chamber called the Recesses, not far from Long-acre. The promises of that establishment were excellent. Soup, fish, and joint —all for the modest sum of eighteenpence. The performance, however, was somewhat feeble. I don't mean to say it wasn't an excellent dinner for the money—it was. But it wasn't an invigorating dinner. The soup was somewhat thin, the fish were generally 'fresh' herrings, and they'd have been better for a little salt originally. The joint was usually boiled beef, and, you see, the joint and the soup were like the two buckets of a well—the stronger the soup the less succulent the joint, and *vice versa*.

One Sunday, I remember, my funds were getting low, very low. I had determined to remain in my lodgings and support nature on tobacco-smoke; but my hunger was too strong. I had a few shillings left, and as the evening wore on, and the cravings of my appetite increased, resolution broke down. I put on my hat, and hurried out in quest of a dinner.

How is it everything looks so ghastly on Sunday? Don't tell me about the prickings of conscience, misspent day, and all that. Good lack! I wish I'd nothing worse than that to reproach myself with. But I believe it to be a physical fact, that on Sunday the air is loaded with bile.

I don't think it rises above a certain altitude; I've escaped it on the heights of Hampstead, on the hills of Surrey; but within a certain distance above the level of the sea I believe the air, between eleven o'clock in the morning and eight at night, on Sunday, to be overcharged with bile. Perhaps it's owing to so many people being in church or chapel, and that they leave their bile outside, as they do their umbrellas on a wet day.

When I made up my mind to go to the Recesses for a dinner, it was because I knew that there was no other place open the prices of which would be within my means. How dismal it looked this Sunday evening, that long low room! its tables almost deserted, save for one or two men here and there nodding over a plate of biscuits. There was pea-soup that night, I remember, and it was rather good too. The fish was fishy, the joint was reduced to a stump.

'Waiter,' I cried, 'can I dispense with the other courses, and dine off the soup?'

'If you wish, of course, sir,' said the waiter.

I had three helps of that excellent pea-soup, and in each plate I put a spoonful of dried mint. But the after result was not exhilarating; it rather clogged the pores, I think, that soup. Miserable and depressed as I went into the Recesses, I felt still more miserable, more depressed after my dinner. I had spent my prescribed allowance. I couldn't go anywhere or do anything. I could only go back to my gloomy lodgings through the sloppy street, and sit, and lonely chew the cud of bitter meditation.

The idea seemed to me horrible; and yet now, as ever, there appeared to be no escape for me from the embraces of this dull melancholy fiend. I couldn't help saying to myself, as I sat with my chin resting on my hands, 'I wish I were dead!'

I didn't mean to say it a
I suppose I must have whi
audibly; for a man who w
opposite me at the table—
been sitting there, smoot
heavy red moustache all t
had been dining, his eyes
his plate—looked up of
and gave me a quick and
glance.

I knew him then; it
hurst, an old schoolfellow
boy he had been always a n
us; that quick sudden gla
had always had such a stra
upon all on whom it fell.
to say he had the Evil
wonderful tales used to b
school about the effect of M
look. Still, I was glad to
any relief from the lonel
monotony of my life was
He recognised me also,
over and sat beside me.

'Well,' he said, afte
shaken hands—he had
flabby, chilly hand, which
sent an icy thrill to my ver
'well, and so you wish
dead.'

'Did you hear me?' I s
it was nonsense, of course.
say so. A foolish habit I
don't mean it.'

'It wasn't nonsense!' h
talked in a low monoton
intelligible enough to th
which it was intended, but
overheard by others. 'It w
sense, but a very rational
wish. I wish so myself;
is more,' he said, 'I have
to carry out both our wish

I laughed uneasily.
joking.'

'I never joke. Until
went on, 'the great deter
ence which has restrained
men, who see the folly a
ness of life, who, measur
feeble capacities for enjoy
their unlimited capabilities
ing, would gladly resign a

s no advantage for them—
t deterring influence has
doubt whether death be
complete severing of the
the soul; whether, indeed,
ot a lingering capability of
ill hanging to the relaxed
lingering consciousness in
ing brain; that, in addition
terness of death, one may
the gloom of the grave,
rs of the charnel-house.'
heavens!' I cried. 'What
idea!' He fascinated me,
I would gladly have risen
away; but he stopped me
ye.
,' he said. 'I have over-
impediment; I have opened
of Death to all mankind.
my young schoolfellow, I
l the secret; lest, tempted
to cross the boundary, I
e, and leave mankind as
as ever. You see this
herb; it is like mint, is it
smell, the taste, everything
int—you would not know
rt; and yet in a small
f this powder lies a release
he miseries of life. Don't
ck; it is innocuous in small
oduces merely a pleasing
but in such a quantity as
nful, it produces lethargy;
quantity brings on syn-
rice, inevitable DEATH. I
n ventured as far as the
ge, but have always stop-
of the third. But I have
ack thus much assurance
world of shadows: con-
s ceases altogether at the
ge. There are no dreams
ep of death.
preliminary stage of leth-
elightful—I often indulge
I have had a doubt some-
ether I might not possess
ional physical organisation;
he herb would produce ex-
same effects on others. I
d to try the experiment on
a large scale. I came here to-night to do it. I have noticed that each frequenter of these rooms, on pea-soup nights, which are frequent, takes one plate of soup, to which he adds one spoonful of mint. Well, I watched my opportunity. I came here as soon as the room was opened; and, whilst the waiter's back was turned, I emptied the contents of the plate of mint into my pocket, and filled the plate with my own powder. The experiment was a bold one. I might have caused the death of innocent persons. However, I persevered; the interests of science overpower considerations of humanity. The experiment has completely succeeded. Each *habitué* of these rooms has swallowed his plate of soup, his spoonful of precious herb; each has gone through the stage of lethargy. There are some now, you observe, passing through that stage.'

I threw an agonised glance around. Yes, sure enough, there were two or three men lying back in their chairs, their heads sunk on their breasts, in a state of complete lethargy.

'And,' he went on, 'I can see the symptoms of the approaching lethargy upon you—the dilated pupil of the eye, the expression of anxiety in the face; yes, all is perfect; the symptoms are—'

'BUT,' I gasped, 'I HAVE TAKEN THREE SPOONFULS!'

'Martyr of science!' he cried, springing up and grasping me by the hand, 'how carefully, how painfully I will watch every symptom of your declining vitality! Dear friend, your case will be an era in the history of humanity. Like Curtius, you have leaped into the chasm for the public weal.'

'But isn't there an antidote?' I gasped; 'a remedy?'

'There is none; and were there, you would not go back from the noble path? My dear friend, imitate the example of the ancient Roman

a quietude and serenity in your last hours is indispensable for the proper noting of your phenomena.'

'But I won't die!' I shouted, getting up. My limbs trembled beneath me; I felt the very chills of death upon me. 'I won't, I won't!' Here I screamed, 'Send for a doctor—for policemen. Quick! Quick! I'm poisoned!'

All the lethargic men jumped to their feet, the waiters came running in, the proprietor appeared, pale and wondering.

'I'm poisoned!' I shouted; 'poisoned in the mint! Send for a doctor, you fools! do you hear?'

'Mad!' said a quiet voice; 'mad as a hatter. Poor fellow! he's subject to those fits. He'll fall down directly; look out for him!'

'But I'm not going to have the character of the house taken away for no mad freaks. What do you mean, sir, by attacking the quality of my victuals, sir?'

'It was he,' I shouted, pointing to my friend, 'who now seeks to screen himself by calling me mad. But, good heavens! will you see a fellow-creature perish, *perish*, PERISH?'

'There, don't aggravate him,' said my friend. 'Put him into a cab and send him to a police-station; he's sure to have been advertised for.'

I was dragged and hustled from the room, and hurled into a cab. Two or three policemen had come up, and one took charge of me inside, whilst another mounted the box. I was quiet now, overcome by my struggles, and lay exhausted in the corner of the cab, waiting the insidious advances of the deadly narcotic.

Presently the cab stopped. 'We've got that chap they advertised for,' cried the man outside, to a policeman who was lounging at the door of the police-station.

'The deuce you have!' said the inspector, coming up. 'Then you've done a good job to-night. There's fifty pounds offered now. Take him right off to the asylum at once. Let's have a look at him, though. Why this ain't the man at all; this ain't Medhurst! Low, you ought to have known better. Red full moustache, drooping eyelids, aquiline nose—why they're as different as light from darkness.'

'What! is Medhurst mad?' I said, a light bursting in upon me.

'Yes; 'as he been playing any of his pranks upon you, sir?—making believe to give you poison, or anythink of that sort? Lord, he's the cunningest chap in creation, that Medhurst. He's a small fortune to the police to bring him back after his escapes. He's quite 'armless too, though he's always up to so many tricks. Quite a gentleman too. I've swallowed a pint or more of his p'ison just to please him, and then he'd stand a bottle of champagne afterwards. That's how you had ought to have served him, sir. There, you won't get hold of him to-night, chaps; he's miles away by this time.'

I have never wished myself dead since then.

Louis Huard, del. Edmund Evans, sc.

BLANCHE RE[illegible] SECOND TIME.

CHRISTMAS-EVE

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LORD LYNN'S WIFE,' ETC.

;l Mail train, eh? Why, ıllow, you will lose the ıf the hunting. Nice , with the scent breast- e horses in their best lraw Appley Gorse on -a sure find and a splen-

I want you to show dandies at Lord Whip- way over Bullingsley ı a pity to leave us just ı spoke our veteran orough sportsman, and m-hearted gentleman of , with whom I had been ver since he first rated ɔe age of ten, for riding pony too close to the ds.

Carew, whose name fig- *nded Gentry* as second s Carew, Esq., of Har- rt, and in the *Army* nant in a light cavalry ıked rueful enough, I assured the good old ınds that there was no ıd that with all my de- until the frost should our sylvan enjoyments The fact was that my under orders for India, re we sailed my father ɜ to accept an invitation e Christmas with an ınt of mine, a certain nd Lady Treherne, who way off, in the West of l whom it so happened ıt seen since my school- l had no particular de- e my last days in Eng- ıit at Bramshaw Hall, l never before been a was especially unpleas- leave home just then. We lived in one of the most famous of those 'grass-shires' which form the paradise of foxhunters and the emporium of weight-carrying hunters and hounds of high degree; while Bramshaw was situated in Blankshire, which, as every one knows, is a rocky, heathy, and eminently picturesque county, where foxhunting can only be pursued under difficulties.

My parents were, however, so anxious that I should not refuse my uncle's well-meant invitation, that I reluctantly made up my mind to accept it, and as there were sundry matters to transact in town, with reference to equipments, outfit, &c., and as we expected to embark for India early in the new year, I was obliged to hurry up to London at once, to attend to the needful preparations, and to be in time to reach Bramshaw before the Christmas festivities should fairly begin. When it began to snow heavily on the day of my leaving London, I reflected that the fine scenting weather in our own county was over for the present, and that I had not lost many runs by my unwilling absence.

With all that, I could not help looking upon my visit to Bramshaw as an unmitigated annoyance. I had seen, as I have already remarked, very little of the relatives under whose roof I was to be domiciled, and to all their friends, as well as to the part of the country in which they resided, I was a total stranger. The Trehernes were people who had for several years led a quiet life on their own estate, and the district in which they lived was one that had a reputation for tenaciously keeping up ancient usages and customs exploded in parts of England more infused

with the metropolitan spirit of change. 'I suppose I am in,' said I to myself, as I gloomily gazed out of the window of the railway carriage and watched the whirling snowflakes sweep past with blinding rapidity, 'for what they call a good old-fashioned Christmas. *I* know. Round games, snapdragon, blindman's buff, forfeits, and the rest; and I shall be lucky if I escape hunt the slipper.'

Bramshaw Hall turned out to be a fine old place, built of stone which age had covered with mosses and lichens of dainty green and golden russet tints, and very much superior in an artistic point of view to the red bricks and white copings of our own ancestral mansion in central England. The Hall stood also in a commanding position, perched as it was on a stone terrace, overlooking all the surrounding country with all its horrent woods, and bare peaks of gray rock, and the purple moorland clothing the neighbouring heights as with a royal robe. One part of the old house—the western end—looked upon a really lovely glen, something like a bit of Cumberland scenery transplanted to the south; and there was a steep fall here from where the terrace ended down to the rough rocks beneath, and to the stream that battled and frothed among the boulders and deep overhanging banks of its narrow bed.

I was very kindly received by the baronet and by my aunt—it was Lady Treherne, by the bye, to whom I was related—and found myself welcomed by a number of guests of different ages, ranging, so far as I could guess, from seven to seventy years, most of whom were Blankshire people, or from the adjacent counties. I was the only late arrival, for all the others had been for several days at Bramshaw; so that, as I did not possess the slightest local knowledge, I was glad to get what Frenchmen call the *carte du pays* from those who were better informed than I was. There was a young fellow there whom I *did* know, one Tollemache—Lionel Tollemache—a full cornet in the Lancer regiment quartered at Slochester, and whose relations had got him an introduction to Sir Charles as to one of the magnates of the country-side.

'Awfully jolly old place, you know, and all that,' said Cornet Tollemache to me aside, and with an air of mysterious importance. 'And as regards your uncle and aunt, I only wish that there were more of the same sort, for kinder people I never knew. Capital house, good cook, decent cover-shooting, and pretty girls staying here; but— You don't believe in ghosts, Carew, of course?'

'Of course not,' said I, wondering.

'Nor do I. Awful stuff!' said my friend, and went off to flirt with a Miss Porter, who came from Slochester too.

A lady whose acquaintance I presently made, and who liked, apparently, to hear the sound of her own voice, was more explicit than the enigmatical subaltern had been. It was thus that Mrs. Methven explained matters: 'Why, you see, Mr. Carew, we are rather celebrated for haunted houses in this part of the country, and the wonder was rather that Bramshaw, old as it is, and with all the dreadful things done here that must have been done of course—you men are sad wicked creatures, Mr. Carew, though of course you won't agree with me about that—should not have had a ghost of its own before. But really, what with the rustlings, and what with the light tread that passes by our bedroom doors at the strangest hours of the night, and what with vague movements, and creaking of the old oak stairs, and things being disturbed or thrown down in a way no servant can account for—why, one does not know what to think; and excepting your good aunt and uncle, to whom no one likes to speak on

bject, I assure you we are all
ingly uneasy and uncomfort-

l indeed, on farther inquiry,
ound it. A vague feeling of
ifort, almost of alarm, was
l among the guests. Dinner,
er, so far as I could see, dis-
all these dismal day-dreams
haunted houses and creaking
; and indeed I have not often
i people who enjoyed them-
so heartily as these Blankshire
around my uncle's hospitable
They all knew each other,
ad at their fingers' ends, so to
the names and circumstances
ry married daughter, and of
son at Sandhurst or the Uni-
r. A few outsiders there were:
nche, the Porter girls, and
Porter—an apoplectic old sol-
who rarely spoke, except with
nce to 'the Dook,' or 'the
sula'—and myself; esoteric per-
who did not know who Mary
ane had married, and who had
admired Frank's score at cric-
r the matchless horsemanship
olphus. But they were all very
and did their best to lighten
atural sense of inferiority to
who were better informed.
inner was an excellent one, and
sed merrily, and the children
in at dessert in gay frocks and
and velvet tunics, and shin-
irls, according to sex and com-
n, and there was a great sil-
lt caldron full of something
nd strong, which was called
assail bowl, and we all sipped
ughed, and became seasonably
and blithely sportive.
n in the drawing-room there
games of all sorts—one of for-
among them—and, to my own
ment, I found myself voted by
ildren into the high dignity
ffice of Lord of Misrule, or
l Mufti, or something of the
which post I accepted because
clapped their little hands and
seemed so eager and bright-eyed, and because even then, at one-and-twenty, I could not bear to say to children, Nay. And we had a great deal of romping, laughter, and intense nonsense, to the disgust of young Tollemache, who wondered how an officer of my standing could thus demean himself; until the tired darlings were taken off to bed, and it was almost time for us grown people to go to bed too. I think the liveliest of the young girls there, the quickest guesser of charade or conundrum, the deftest at 'post' or 'puss in the corner,' the smartest competitor at forfeits, was my young cousin Blanche, the only child of Sir Charles and Lady Treherne; a delicate pale slip of a girl, with fine eyes and long fair hair, but by no means so pretty as several of the little rich-complexioned West-of-England pixies who frolicked around her. Blanche's health, as I conjectured when first she put her thin hand into that of 'Cousin Talbot Carew,' was none of the best; and I could see by Lady Treherne's half-anxious, half-gratified look, that she was surprised by the unusual animation which her daughter, usually languid and reserved, displayed on the occasion of these Christmas sports.

Well, we went to bed. My room was at the east end of the house, and was known as the Tapestry Room. Its walls were, indeed, covered with tapestry of great antiquity and ugliness, and the bed was an imposing structure, calculated to impart to the intelligent foreigner, should he ever gain admittance, a proper appreciation of the majesty of sleep. A wood fire, clear, ruddy, and bright, burned on the ample hearth, where the massive 'dogs' or andirons of parcel gilt steel were formed to represent the heraldic cognisance of the Trehernes. I was tired, but not disposed for sleep; so instead of retiring to rest, I sat down before the fire, from time to time tossing a fresh

log into the blaze, and meditating on many things, on my life, past, present, and future, as I gazed on the glowing embers, which seemed to have that strange fascination for me that they have had for thousands.

At last, the sullen sound of the great clock on the turret above the stables reminded me that it was very late, conventionally as well as actually, and that I had better get some sleep while I could; and then it was that, feeling for my watch and missing that accustomed pocket-companion, I recollected that when we were at play downstairs, my watch had been one of the forfeited pledges, late redeemed, and that it had been left lying on the marble mantelpiece in the great drawing-room, since I had forgotten to take it up when my little playmates left us. 'It serves me right,' said I cynically, with the remembrance of Tollemache's face floating before my mental vision, 'for making such a fool of myself. Never mind! I'll fetch it.' So I took up my candle and sallied forth. The passage which gave access to my room was called the Gothic Gallery, probably because it was narrow and dark, with hideous mediæval carvings in niches, and stained-glass casements, through the tinted panes of which the pure white snow outside looked crimson, ochre-yellow, or of a dusky green. This passage leads into the wider and loftier one styled the Oaken Gallery, where the family portraits hang against the panelled walls; and from this, the broad and elaborately-carved staircase of dark and polished wood conducts to the entrance-hall below. I made my way to the drawing-room, found my watch without difficulty, the centre of a heap of torn gloves, crushed flowers, and the pink or blue papers that had been wrapped around French bonbons, relics of the juvenile revelry. I had nearly reached my room again when a gust of wind, caused by the sudden opening of a door, extinguished my candle. Immediately afterwards, I saw the faint glimmer of a light slowly and steadily approaching. Nearer and nearer it came; and presently I could distinguish a figure clothed in white, or some light colour that looked white in the uncertain light, gliding with a noiseless tread and a smooth evenness of motion which was of itself remarkable. I am, I hope, as brave as my neighbours; and I may say, without boasting, that I have not been found lacking when face to face with danger in a tangible shape; but I confess that a cold shuddering chill ran through my limbs, and that my heart bounded like a startled horse, and then seemed to cease beating, as I caught sight of this mysterious form silently and surely approaching me. The Blankshire lady's story of vague alarms among the visitors on account of strange occurrences by night in that old house, the very scene, with its solemn state and antique magnificence, for the manifestation of supernatural phenomena, recurred to me with disagreeable emphasis. Idle words had I thought them at the time when they were uttered; but now I felt anything rather than inclined to ridicule them. The apparition drew nearer, and by an involuntary impulse I shrank back into a doorway, as if to allow it to pass. It did pass; and in a moment more I breathed more freely, and began to be heartily ashamed of my superstitious fancies.

Blanche! Yes, it was my young cousin, Blanche Treherne. I recognised her as she passed close by me, carrying her candle in a hand that was as steady as if it had been that of a statue; and, in truth, marble itself could scarcely have been paler than her fair innocent face, as she went by, to all appearance, without perceiving me. She still wore the dress that she had worn during the evening's merry-making downstairs, her pretty white frock relieved by

lmixture of light blue. Her ir, of a pale golden colour, ose over her shoulders; and d with wonder that her small re bare, so that her step no more sound than if she eed been a phantom. On she valking slowly but with no hesitation, her eyes fixed on ng—what, I knew not—as it's shadowy hand had beck- er onwards. By some in- had refrained from address- even in my surprise at the ion; but now, moved by an for which I could not ac- left my place of espial and l her at some distance, being o tread as lightly as I could. sed on, along the Oaken Gal- d I wondered more and more strangeness of her conduct. n chamber was, I conjectured, floor above, as were those of of the visitors, while others, as the master and mistress of se, slept in that part of the from which every step re- er farther and farther. Why, name of common sense, had sen to range the house thus, bitter winter's night? and ould be the steady purpose ew her forward, as steel is o a magnet?

now she can go no farther, er intention be, as doubtless it scend to the reception-rooms y the grand staircase, for she ched the end of the Oaken . Such was my soliloquy, as lled my brains in the effort se a reason for these extra- proceedings on the part of f my cousin's age. It was ssible that she, like myself, ave left downstairs some ob- which she was now in search; , why this ghostlike gliding re feet about the mansion of he was the heiress, indulged ed by all? These thoughts to my head as for an instant she stood still, near the angle of the broad landing-place, while in front of her was the great French window, filling up nearly two-thirds of the width of the wide passage, by which the Oaken Gallery was lighted. This window was an innovation, no doubt, but an improvement on the small-paned casement of stained glass, through which the sun had scarcely had power to illumine the old pictures that lined the walls, which it had superseded.

'By heaven, she is lost!' was my hasty exclamation, as, to my infinite horror, I saw Blanche turn from the staircase, and deliberately yet quickly throw open the tall French window. That very day, just after sunset, Sir Charles had insisted on my admiring the view from that west window, which commanded a bold sweep of country, swelling moorland and black pine-woods, rocky fort and the distant sea. The window was at a great height above the ground, since from it one could look down, sheer over the edge of the stone terrace on which the mansion stood, to a rocky dell, where far below a brawling stream made music among the boulders that fretted its waters into foam. All this I remembered, at the same instant that the dreadful truth flashed upon me. Blanche was a sleepwalker—her actions were prompted by the strange mechanical semi-consciousness of the somnambulist—and from this terrible slumber that was not rest, her awakening would be in another world. Nearer, and nearer yet, she drew to the giddy verge, her eyes steadily fixed on vacancy. She stood poised on the very sill of the open window, through which the bleak night-air rushed in, causing the candle in her unconscious hand to flare and flicker. I dared not call, dared not raise my voice, lest I should startle her, and precipitate the catastrophe that seemed imminent. There was a chance, though a poor one, that she would

close the window and return to her room, as I had heard that sleep-walkers sometimes do, ignorant of the mortal peril so nearly encountered.

Now she seems to bend slightly forward, her slender figure actually overhanging the abyss. A fall from such a height must be fatal. Bitterly blaming myself for my own lack of prudence, in allowing things to proceed to this pitch before I interfered, I mustered all my strength for one desperate bound, sprang to her side, and caught the girl's falling weight in my arms, at the very moment when she stepped from the window-ledge. A second or two would have made my hasty movement too late; and as it was, it was well that Blanche was a light burden, and that I was active and strong, or both might have fallen from that dizzy perch. Blanche, abruptly awakened, broke the silence of the house by an agonised scream, as of mingled pain and terror, and for an instant she struggled, while the candlestick dropped from her hand. The candle was extinguished in its fall; but I looked down and saw the tiny luminous spark of the burning wick falling, falling through the midnight darkness, and then heard the dull clang as the silver candlestick reached the rocks below.

Blanche's shrieks had effectually aroused the household, and before I could soothe her natural alarm, she was clasped in her mother's arms; while a babel of voices rose clamorously around us, and conjectures, exclamations of horror or of thankfulness, were uttered on all hands, as visitors and servants came successively hurrying to the spot whence the cries had been heard. That the young heiress of the Trehernes was a somnambulist was what no one, not even her own parents, knew, nor had the poor frightened child herself the least suspicion that this was the case; but at any rate the incipient ghost-stories with reference to Bramshaw Hall were now nipped in the bud, and the most superstitiously disposed could not doubt the connection between the mysterious occurrences of which they had whispered, and Blanche's unlucky peculiarity. The candlestick, dinted and battered, was found next morning among the rocks below the terrace.

I prefer to pass lightly over the deep and fervent expressions of gratitude and strong feeling with which Sir Charles and Lady Treherne acknowledged the preservation of their only child; but I remember to have reddened and winced excessively under the weight of praises undeserved, since any one else in my place would surely have done as much, and it rather annoyed me than otherwise, that the company persisted in treating me as a sort of hero during the rest of my stay, and in humouring and deferring to me as if I had been some great public benefactor. The only exception to this general conspiracy to make much of an unworthy individual was Blanche herself. My young cousin seemed to avoid me since that eventful night; and of all the farewells that were said when I returned home, the coldest 'good-bye' was Blanche's own.

We sailed for India; and for four years I went through the usual round of Indian duties and amusements, with no opportunities of active service, but a fair average of sport with gun, rifle, and boar-spear, with plenty of drill as well as dancing, and an occasional change of station as the chief military event of the year. During this time I sometimes received, though rarely, a letter from my aunt; but from home I often heard tidings of the Trehernes, who no longer resided constantly at Bramshaw, but were often in London, on the Continent, or at English seaside watering-places. At the end of four years, my elder brother, poor Tom, died, and my parents pressed me to leave the army and come home, the

necessity for a profession in my case no longer existing. With some regret I bade adieu to my former life and its associations; but, after all, there is no great hardship in being the future proprietor of an entailed estate like ours, and with tolerable resignation I sent in my papers and renounced the career of arms.

I had not been long in England before an invitation to repeat my former Christmas visit to Bramshaw Hall reached me, couched in such affectionate terms, and so urgent, that I could not find it in my heart to decline. 'Mind,' said my father jestingly, 'that you don't leave your heart behind you there, unless indeed you have left it in India. Miss Blanche, I am told by those who are judges of such matters, has turned out amazingly good-looking.'

I laughed, and answered with a tone of perfect conviction that there was little prospect of any love-passages between my cousin, now sixteen years of age, and myself. I found that my father's account of Blanche's appearance hardly did justice to the reality. She had developed into a very pretty girl, who at moments, as when she sang, which she did in a sweet sad voice, and with much musical taste and skill, looked absolutely lovely. I took an opportunity to ask Lady Treherne, half jocularly, whether 'the ghost' was effectually exorcised, and sleep-walking a thing of the past. With perfect confidence my aunt replied in the affirmative. Care, and change of air and of scene, amusement and study, had, she said, done wonders for Blanche's health; and whereas the extreme delicacy of her constitution had formerly caused much anxiety to her parents, they now considered her to be quite well and quite strong. 'It was on her account, dear girl,' said Lady Treherne, 'that we quiet old folks have run about the world as we have done, travelling and pleasure-hunting; for you must know, Talbot, this is the first Christmas we have spent at the Hall since—since you were with us.'

A curious coincidence. It was wild snowy weather again, and with few exceptions the same company that I had formerly met had reassembled under Sir Charles's hospitable roof. As before, I had arrived on Christmas-eve; and as the dinner in its old style, and the dance, and the songs and music, and the games for the children, succeeded in precisely the same fashion, I could have imagined that the four last years were the baseless vision of a dream, and that this was my first and only Christmas at Bramshaw Hall. One change there certainly was. Blanche, no longer a child, was taken in to dinner by me, and she did not avoid me in the pointed, almost petulant, manner in which she had turned from me when she was but twelve years old; but I could make no way with her in conversation, nor did she meet my eyes frankly, but allowed hers to rest anywhere but on my face when I addressed her, answered my best things with monosyllables, blushed when I spoke carelessly of our former meeting, and altogether disconcerted me, who was perhaps a little vain of my powers of pleasing. I soon gave her up as hopeless, and directed my attentions elsewhere.

Never in my life had I felt myself less disposed for sleep than when, late on the night of Christmas-eve, I sat before the crackling wood fire in my bedroom—they had given me the Tapestry Room, as before—and meditated on all that had occurred, for good or ill, since last I was the tenant of that ancient chamber. Four years ago poor Tom, my elder brother, was hale and strong, and I a younger son, with no prospects but such as my profession might, in these, from a military point of view, hard times, open out before me. Four years ago I was setting out for India, with scanty chances of revisiting familiar scenes

and associating with old friends, until absence should have weakened the memories of the first, and thinned the numbers of the latter. Yes, four years ago; how strange was the adventure of that other Christmas-eve, to which my thoughts flew back, no matter on what subject I might be pondering!

Blanche Treherne was a pretty girl—very pretty. Yes, my father had been accurately informed on that point. Accomplished too, but not, perhaps, a person of very deep feelings; or surely she might have been a little more cordial with a kinsman just returned from a four years' exile, and who had been once lucky enough to render her a service which—Well, well! that was an old story now, and young ladies have plenty to occupy their heads without treasuring up romantic gratitude for something that happened in their childhood.

I drew aside the heavy window-curtains and looked out. Snow, snow everywhere, as on that memorable night long ago. It was but a thin sprinkling as yet, however, for it had but begun to fall on the previous day. The sky was streaked with clouds, through the rifts of which a wan new moon peeped coldly. There had been no moon to light the inky blackness of the night four years since, and so far there was a difference.

I could not go to bed. Somehow, do what I would, I remained wakeful and watchful, with an undefinable impression upon me that I was wanted, that I had a duty to perform, and that I must not sleep. I listened intently for the slightest sound, and even the moan of the wind without seemed to me like a human voice complaining. Again and again did I throw wood upon the fire, until my supply of fuel waned to such an extent that it was plain that I must soon retire to rest, or sit up fireless. 'This will never do,' said I; 'fancy is making a fool of me; and because something queer happened when I was last here, I cannot accept the prosaic view of life which is of course the true one. I'll just slip out and take a glance at the scene of my former adventure, and then come back and go to sleep for the rest of the dark hours.'

So saying, I took my candle, and emerged into the Gothic Gallery. Instinctively I turned to the point where, four years since, I had espied the gleam of the light in Blanche's hand. All was darkness now. Here, too, was the doorway into which I had retired to allow the apparition, as I had deemed it, to pass. Smiling at the recollection of my own irrational alarm, I went on, walking softly, to the corner of the Oaken Gallery. 'So vivid is the imagination,' said I, 'that I almost expect to see the glimmer of the light, and the childish figure gliding on before me, as when—'

The words died away on my lips, for what I beheld was a sight that curdled my very life blood with horror.

At the other end of the Oaken Gallery, receding from me, and within a few feet of the great west window, was a female figure draped in white, distinctly visible, and carrying a lighted candle with the same impassive mechanical steadiness that I had noticed four years since; advancing slowly too, and noiselessly, with the same air of being beckoned forwards by a viewless hand that had shocked me in a child so narrowly rescued from a cruel death. It was no dream—no creation of a distempered brain. No. It was Blanche herself; her bright hair floating like pale gold over her shoulders, and wearing a loose *peignoir* of white cashmere. While I stood speechless, she advanced, and with a slow but certain movement of the hand which was free, she began to unclasp the fastenings of the great French window.

moment I stood, as if root-
he ground by horror. I
rush forward, but my feet
ailed to the floor, and my
ien I essayed to call aloud,
to obey my volition. The
ting sound, as the window
pened, and the inward rush
hrieking night-wind, dis-
ie spell of my helplessness,
ted along the gallery, shout-
ttempting to shout, though
reached my own ear but as
and hollow murmur. The
ire, bending forward, seem-
to vanish in the blackness
Suddenly the candle was
hed by a stronger gust of
l I uttered a cry of horror,
ight that Blanche had ac-
en; but by Heaven's mercy
ime, but just in time. My
round her waist, my hand
er arm, as she was tottering
ry verge of the dread pre-
id by a quick and powerful
drew her back. She awoke,
ow moaning cry, such as
i be heard on the lips of a
denly aroused from sleep.
this?' she said wildly—
im I?—Cousin—what—
Then, as she looked around,
he reality of the position,
ered, and sank fainting and
us into my arms. Bearing
ftly and tenderly as I could
Oaken Gallery, I laid her
that stood in the adjacent
and hurrying to Lady
s door, aroused my aunt
sleep, and related in few
at had befallen her daugh-
how, a second time, she
providentially snatched
aws of death.

s the association of ideas
he mischief—not a doubt
l the old family physician,
known Blanche from her
the cure seemed complete,
and in effect was so; but no doubt the Christmas spent for the first time at the old house and in the old way; the similarity of the weather and of the evening's amusements; and, above all, Mr. Carew's presence, with the memory of the former adventure, influenced our young friend's fancy in a manner that might have been—But we won't talk of that now.'

The Trehernes left Bramshaw at once; and at their earnest wish I accompanied them, and paid the remainder of my visit at their house in London. Here it was that I learned to find Blanche very, very dear to me; and that after some weeks I ventured to ask her to be my wife. 'I thought,' said I, as I took her little hand, unresisting, in mine, 'that you rather disliked me than otherwise formerly; but perhaps now—'

'Do you remember four years ago?' she asked, interrupting me, and with a burning cheek and a glance, half arch, half shy, that puzzled me greatly.

'Yes, of course I do,' answered I, perplexed.

'Because I have loved you ever since—ever since you—first—' and she shuddered, and hid her beautiful blushing face on my shoulder.

Sir Charles and Lady Treherne gave their willing sanction to the engagement between Blanche and myself, which was equally welcome to my own parents; but on account of the youth of the bride-elect, it was thought better to postpone the wedding for another year, till Miss Treherne should have passed her seventeenth birthday.

When I asked her, as in duty bound, to name the day for that all-important ceremony, the dear girl hesitated for a moment, and then, with tears, but not of sorrow, sparkling in her loving eyes, she softly made answer, 'Christmas-eve.'

MY CLIENT UPSTAIRS

When I first began to practise as a solicitor at Brighton, I occupied an office in a street not far from the Western-road. I could only afford to hire one room, for my professional earnings were at present nil, and my means rapidly approaching the same figure; and a queer three-cornered room it was. The house had been built in a curious shape, to fit the site, which was in form an irregular triangle. The other rooms on the same floor were pretty square, and all the corners and twists had been screwed into mine, which was let cheap on account of its not being a handsome apartment. It looked out over roofs and chimney-pots, and by putting my head close to the wall and looking sideways, I could just catch a glimpse of one of the minarets of the wonderful Pavilion. I had the window painted over, however, with a coat of white lead, as I found that the habit of looking out of window didn't tend to professional industry; and then, as now, I'm so vague in my mental habits, that I required the very smallest excuse for neglecting the work I had in hand, and the speckled back of a cat or the brown wing of a sparrow would carry my mind far away from the realms of sheepskin. But when the window was done up I took to reading novels, and I don't know whether I shouldn't have done better with my furred and feathered friends.

As far as attendance went, however, I was a most exemplary attorney. Indeed, for the first few months of my tenancy, I almost lived at my office. I had my dinner sent in from a neighbouring tavern, and after business hours I would sport the oak and sit smoking over the fire, reading a little and thinking a good deal, till far into the night. My thoughts were not over-pleasant. The dwindling away of my little capital, the improbability of its replenishment, the difficulty of making any head against the *vis inertiæ* of life, —these were the topics of my meditations.

The rest of the building was occupied for offices by a surveyor and architect, a man who had a large staff of clerks and seemed to do a good business. The rule of the house was, that at seven o'clock the woman who looked after the rooms, and who lived in an adjoining back street, would come and lock up. Nobody slept in the house. If any one wanted to stay later, he could have the keys, on the condition that he left them at the charwoman's house.

I was generally the last in, and Mrs. Winton the charwoman usually came to my room with the keys, it had become such a constant occurrence for me to lock up the house. One night it happened that I had gone out for a few minutes, in fact to purchase a penny roll which I intended to eat for tea, and in the mean time Mrs. Winton had been to the place and locked up. I had therefore to go for the keys, and having obtained them, I let myself in and made my way upstairs to my own room. Now I must tell you, that there was another story above the floor in which my office was situated; but the stairs leading to that story were blocked up by bulks of timber stretched across. My landlord had told me that this floor was unoccupied. The rooms, he said, were mere dogholes and of no use;

been servants' bedrooms when the house was used

I put my latch-key into nd was about to open my hung a little, and I was y knee against it to force vhen in the act I turned and saw in the gloom, for ıost dark, the glimmer of gure standing on the stairs ı me. I was a little start- prang into my room more an I should otherwise have truck a match, lit a candle, the while as if somebody ing over my shoulder; but s the light appeared, my vanished; I went out into g with a candle, and looked . There was no sign of here. Still I felt the sense hing uncannie about the couldn't sit down and read Mrs. Winton had raked out and so I turned out once went home to my lodgings. as Saturday night, and of ıad no idea of going to the t day. But it so happened s going away on the Mon- ing to Lewes, by the first d as I was walking home- had been to Kemptown, lodged at the upper end of ern-road—I bethought me papers I should want next at my office. I went for the efore, and let myself in; and ılocked my office, I got the astened up my desk, and

I felt dull, and cold, and ; and I knew that if I went ny lodgings, I should find d nobody to light one; for e I lodged with were very their attendance at chapel, f the conditions they made ook the rooms was, that uld be no cooking on Sun- he consequence was, that I l any dinner at all on Sun- made a very late breakfast and as for anything else, why, I took my chance. On this day chance had not befriended me; I had eaten nothing since breakfast, and felt rather weak and hungry. At the office I kept some coffee and a percolater, a tiny kettle, and a bag of biscuits; and it happened that Mrs. Winton had laid the fire ready for Monday morning, so that I had nothing to do but to put a match to it, and there before long I had a comfortable smiling fire and the kettle singing merrily. After I had made my coffee, I began to think a glass of grog afterwards would not be amiss. I went out therefore once more, and got a bottle of whisky at the public-house I was in the habit of having my dinner from, and brought it back in my pocket. And then I sat down in my office chair, which was tolerably easy, and lit my pipe, and began to feel comfortable. So comfortable indeed I felt, that after a while my head sank on my breast, my limbs relaxed, and I fell asleep.

When I awoke it was quite dark, and very cold. The candle had gone out, the fire was out; there was not a spark of light anywhere. In truth, for a few minutes I couldn't recollect where I was, or indeed who I was. It was as if a smoothing-iron had been passed over my mind, and I had lost all memory and sense of identity; everything but a tremor of trouble and pain,—under which I gasped and struggled like a new-born infant for its first breath. And when I came to a recollection of where I was, this sense of oppression, of almost despair, still haunted me. I seemed to be encompassed by some inexplicable wrong and discomfort, from which I could not escape. I began to tremble violently, and fell into a cold profuse perspiration. But there had been something in my sleep that had harmonised with my misery—a sort of bass accompaniment to the treble of my own imaginings; and I was conscious that although their dismal chords were now ceas-

ing to vibrate within me, yet that the accompaniment still continued. When I came to myself more completely, I found that some such maimed and mournful performance really was going on, for I distinctly heard a chorus of deep rapid groans. They seemed to come from all around, and I sprang from my chair, trying to fight them away with my hands. I only beat the air. My match-box was empty; I blindly made my way to the door; if I couldn't reach the open air, I felt I should go mad.

When I opened the door, I heard the groans still more distinctly. They came from above; the stairs seemed alive with them. I was unnerved by my uneasy slumbers, and completely carried away by a superstitious panic terror. The door of my room had slammed-to behind me, and I had left the latch-key inside, also the key of the outer door. I couldn't regain my own room; and if I went down-stairs, I should only find myself in a dark narrow lobby, out of which there was no egress, for I had locked the front door when I came in.

All of a sudden the groans ceased, and everything became deadly still. Then the clocks of the churches round chimed out the hour—one. It was the deadest, loneliest time of night, and I was locked up in this dismal haunted house.

From earliest childhood I have had at times a frightful vision. I am shut up in a lonely house; I hear the tramp of footsteps outside, the noise of the street. All gradually becomes silent; all signs of life die away; a dim gray twilight encompasses me. And then, rooted to one spot, unable to move or cry, I am surrounded by the crepitation and whirr of some vast fluttering, as of myriad wings, in the midst of which appears, I know not what; the Evil One, I used to think, but I never saw him; I always awoke with the vehemence and strength of my terror. Just such a nightmare I had upon me now, but I couldn't wake from it.

I suppose at last that the shame I inwardly felt at letting my nerves get the better of my reason, drove me forward. I know that eventually I faced the stairs, carried them with a rush, scrambled over or under —I don't know which—the balks of timber, and found myself on a narrow landing, from which opened half-a-dozen doors. It wasn't very dark here, as there was a skylight in the roof, though it was nearly choked with dust and cobwebs. The groans still continued, and seemed to surround me. I tried the doors one by one. They were locked, all but the last one, and that I opened.

The room I entered was not quite dark, for there was a dormer window in it, which threw a gleam of light across the room, and in this gleam I could distinguish the figure of a woman in white.

She was wringing her hands and groaning, but as I entered she sank back on what appeared to be a couch, and I lost sight of her face in the shadow. The groans ceased, and there was a dead silence for a while. Now all this time I had been turning over in my mind the most approved way of exorcising demons.

I should have crossed myself if I'd known how, but in those days we hadn't learnt such ways; I'd have repeated the Lord's prayer, or the collect for the day, but I couldn't remember either. All the demon-destroying methods I'd ever heard of presented themselves to my mind, and then eluded its grasp. The only thing it occurred to me to say was,

'Hullo!'

'Oah, oah! I be very bad—very bad,' whispered a feeble voice; and at that moment all my visions of witches and warlocks, of ghosts and hobgoblins vanished, and I awoke to the fact that there really was a human being there, ill and suffering.

s the matter? How do
here?' I cried.
as no answer but a groan.
ere now used to the semi-
and I saw a small deal
matches upon it. I struck
d looked about me. The
traces of occupation; a
ned chair, a broken look-
a truckle-bed, and on the
l was lying an old woman
ap.
n the doctor?' she said

nt I'll go and fetch one,'

go away just this minute.
st bad. I've been here, O
w how long—days, weeks,
ink; and nobody come to
hollored a good bit, too.'
d! I should think you had.
near hallooed me out of

did I frighten you?' said
dy with a feeble chuckle,
aint attempt to adjust the
r nightcap. 'Lor', my
et me some drink; my
rnt up, and all the water's

own-stairs, broke open my
some water and spirits,
g given the old lady a
out to bring some assist-

went to the charwoman's
l after some delay suc-
rousing her.
' she cried, when I told her
omebody ill in the rooms
offices. 'It be old Mrs.
rat her! Why couldn't
l morning?'
went for a doctor, secured
turned to the house.
inton soon explained the
ne. It was she who had
ission to a poor old wo-
p in an empty room up-
r condition that she should
rself be seen in the day-
any of the tenants of the
building. This undertaking Mrs. Pearson, for that was her name, had faithfully executed. She had been creeping down-stairs on Saturday night to try and get some assistance, when she heard me coming to my office, and she had retreated at once, and crawled into bed, and after that she had no strength to move.

She was a woman who had seen better days, and her great terror was the workhouse. If she could only manage to find a shelter for her head, so as to die respectably, without forfeiting her position in the world, she didn't care what martyrdom she underwent. Poor Mrs. Winton was in a great way: she didn't know what to do with the old lady. She feared her employer would dismiss her from the care of his houses, if he found out she had let anybody sleep on the premises. Altogether, I felt as if I'd got my hands full of old women, who all of them seemed to throw themselves upon me for advice and conduct.

Presently the doctor came, and saw Mrs. Pearson.

'She's pretty bad,' he said, as he came down. 'Want and starvation as much as anything. Where are her friends?'

'She ain't got none,' cried Mrs. Winter.

'Then she ought to be sent to the workhouse.'

But when we tried to explain to old Mrs. Pearson that she'd have to go to the workhouse, she pleaded so hard against it that she quite melted me. Mrs. Winton had a room in her own house which she sometimes let, and I promised to be answerable for the rent of it. So we moved the old soul at daybreak—Mrs. Winton, her husband, and I—and established her in her new apartment.

After a few days, under the influence of beef-tea and port-wine—my last sovereigns were rapidly melting away under the expense of a double establishment—she got a

good deal better, and I went to see her. She was a very jolly old dame, on the whole. Wonderfully thankful, too, to Providence, that seemed to me to have done so little for her.

'I can't speak, my dear,' she'd cry to me in a husky whisper, 'but there, I'm so thankful, I can hear. It's very often I can't hear, but then I gets my woice back again, dear. That shows there's a overruling Providence, don't it?'

I really got very fond of the old woman, and used to go and sit with her a good deal. But that didn't bring any grist in; and grist was wanted badly enough.

One day we began to talk about her former history. It was on her deaf day, as it happened; she'd got her 'woice,' but couldn't hear, consequently was completely indifferent to interruptions.

'Poor dear Pearson,' she said, 'left me very well off when he died. There was the cheesemonger's business in Cripplegate as brought in three or four hundred a year, and a row of houses in Brighton here which let for as much more. But as for the business, I give that up to my daughter's husband. I'd plenty to live upon, and no other child but she; and says I to them, "As long as you keeps a 'ome for the old 'ooman, why, I'll never ask you nothing for good-will." But after a bit we quarrelled, me and Jane—ah, she's a hard un, sir, she is—and they turned me out of the house, sir, that they did. And when I says to 'em, "Pay me for the business," they snaps their fingers at me, they do indeed. Well, sir, with that I goes to a lawyer, a nice respectable young man, I thought; and he promises he'd get me my money, and charge me nothing for it. So with that I comes down to Brighton, and takes a house and furnishes it respectable, thinking my money safe enough. Then after a bit he comes to me, and says, "Why, you've deceived me about this here case: you haven't a leg to stand upon, and I'm so much costs out of pocket," he says. "A hundred and fifty pounds I must have," he says. Well, sir, he frightened me so as I agreed I'd pay him the money, but I hadn't got it all at once, and he pressed me very hard, so at last he proposes this to me. He says he's found a gent as wants to take a lease of my houses, and to pay me three hundred a-year for 'em; and he agrees that he'll take this gent's word for the costs, if he'll pay the rents into my lord's hands—the lawyer's, you know, my dear; and he was to keep the writings till the money was paid. And he made a mortgage too in the name of a friend of his, as he said, who would stand security for me till the money was paid. And he was to draw back five-and-twenty pounds a quarter for hisself, and pay me the rest. Well, sir, this seemed fair enough; and, to say the truth, sir, I was glad to get the houses off my hands, for, though they brought in more money, there was a deal of bother with 'em, and there's a good many people as will impose upon a poor lone woman. So, after all, I'd got plenty to live upon, and no bother, and very comfortable I was for a bit. Well, sir, when the first quarter's rent was doo, down comes the lawyer, and he says, says he, "He's gone! bolted! a scoundrel! a villain!" Just like that, sir, he calls out, rampaging about the room. "But, thank heaven," says I, "the houses ain't bolted too; I see 'em yesterday, and all let to nice respectable tenants." "But what's the good of that?" says he. "We can't draw the rents; he's got his lease, he'll take the rents, and we can't prevent him. Whatever did you trust a scamp like that for?" And so it was, sir; for when I goes to the houses after a bit, and asks for my rent, they laughs at me, and tells me I'm mad; and one old chap,

ficer, sir, said he'd paid his rent
e proper parties, and he'd give
ito custody for false pretences,
Well, sir, the lawyer he went
eadful; would have his money,
id; swore I was in league with
nan to deceive him, and—well,
e frightened me so that he got
o sign a paper—a bill of sale,
lled it—and next thing I knew
y things was swep' away, and
ailies in the house for rent, and
andlord calling me an old swin-
'cause the lawyer had robbed
And then I was turned upon
reets, sir, an old woman as had
s lived respectable; and what
to do? If it hadn't been for
Winton, as had known me in
days and done charing for
'd have gone to the poor-house.
that will be the end of it,' she
beginning to cry.

'hat!' I said; 'you with a
row of houses belonging to
nd going to the poor-house!
, the ratepayers won't stand
old lady. We'll see about

I did see about it. I never had greater satisfaction in my life than in tracing out the turns and winds of my old friend's attorney; showing the man of straw to be an accomplice of his, and that the whole transaction was a fraud. I didn't rest till I got the lawyer struck off the rolls. He haunts the Old Bailey now, a tout for rogues as bad as himself but not yet fully detected. Still, he was very nearly succeeding. If the old lady had not met with somebody who believed in her, and took up her case, he'd have got that row of houses for nothing; and as he was a clever fellow, and had enlarged ideas, I've no doubt he'd have been a member of parliament by now, if his career had not been untimely cut short.

And somehow my client upstairs brought me luck. I never wanted for business afterwards; and I am thankful to say that, although my old friend always threatens to leave me the row of houses she owns, yet that I can do very well without them.

FRED. TALBOT.

A WINTER SONG

I.

middle of the merry,
rous, leafy month of June,
the roses were in flower
d the nightingale in tune,

II.

the days were daily tending
ward the glow-tide of July,
the blush was on the clover
d the bloom was on the rye:

III.

by a rippling mill-stream,
msel young and soft and fair,
a cheek of cream and crimson,
ith a wealth of golden hair.

IV.

Straight I sigh'd, and she, replying,
Blush'd a tender, rosy hue:
What meant blushing, what meant sighing,
When it pass'd betwixt us two?

V.

Now the snow is on the heather,
Gone the roses, gone the birds,
Gone the day when two lives blended
Into one with two low words.

VI.

But though faded summer's glory,
Though abroad no more we roam,
Now we read life's sweet old story
In the garden-land of—Home!

ASTLEY H. BALDWIN.

LARRY'S APPRENTICESHIP

An Irish Fairy Legend

BY MRS. G. LINNÆUS BANKS, AUTHOR OF 'GOD'S PROVIDENCE HOUSE,' ETC.

CHAPTER I.

'AH, sure, an' did I ever tell ye how the M'Canns came to be carpenters?'

This query was put by Margaret M'Cann (an old, valuable, faithful, and warm-hearted Irish servant of my mother's) to myself and youngest brother, who were seated—myself on the kitchen fender, and he on a low stool—listening to her *true* stories of Banshees and Leprechauns, in both of which she was a stout believer.

She had just told us of the wailing banshee she had herself seen and heard on the river bank, and of a leprechaun in his red cap and miniature suit of green; and she had borne with perfect good-humour our ridicule and banter over her credulity, when she put the sudden question, 'Did ye know, then, how the M'Canns came to be carpenters?'

'I never knew they were carpenters,' said I, with a light laugh.

'Why, Margaret, I thought all your family were farmers,' cried Fred, with an assumption of prior information.

'Them's the Quins, Master Fred. They are all farmers to this blessed day; an' the M'Canns were farmers too, an' had a fine holding amongst the Wicklow mountains, just a thrifle beyant Enniskerry, till Larry M'Cann (my grandfather that was) met with an adventure amongst the Good People.'

Here Margaret, being a devout Catholic, crossed herself.

'Good People! O, I suppose you mean fairies,' was my amendment.

'Sure, miss, an' I do; but we never speak of them but as the Good People. It's onlucky.'

'O, that's only in Ireland,' suggested Fred, with a droll wink at me. 'In England, you may call them anything you like, and they won't mind it one bit.'

'Are ye sure now, Master Fred?'

'Certain. But, Margaret, what had the fairies to do with Larry M'Cann's carpentering?'

'Well, I'll tell ye, of coorse as it wor towld to me, when I was a slip of a colleen no bigger than yez.'

And Margaret settled herself on her chair with all the importance of an old story-teller.

'Ye must know that Larry was as fine an' strappin' a lad as ever stepped over the daisies. It was he that could handle a flail or a plough, or dig the praties, or stack the hay in the haggard. And when he went to chapel on a Sunday in his best frieze coat, with the ends of his bright handkercher flying loose, an' his caubeen cocked rakishly on one side, sure an' weren't all the girls in Enniskerry in love with his blue eyes an' yellow hair, and weren't half of them dying to have him for a bachelor?'

I presume we listeners looked mystified with the word 'bachelor' so applied, for Margaret explained, 'That's what you call a sweetheart, miss.

'But Larry, though not consi[illegible] laughed with one girl, an' j[illegible] with another; an' whenever he [illegible] to Dublin, or Phœnix Park, o[illegible] Strawberry-beds, could take the [illegible] with the best, and have the pur[illegible]

artner—an' troth it's he
lance a jig—but he never
takin' a partner for life,
ı' himself as a bachelor,
with Kitty Quin, an' her
made a hole in his heart
He was nigh six-an'-
n he met her. It was at
t the Seven Churches of
h, an' sorra a bit could
ı prayers for looking at
owld her beads so piously,
emin' to think of the
r her own pretty face at

heard grandfather say
h he was as bowld and
his way with the lasses
in Enniskerry, his knees
ed together, an' his heart
a flutter before he could
elf, when Michael Quin
the hand, an' comin' to-
said, "Larry, here's our
back from aunt Riley's;"
Larry wor too dazed to
t on, "Have yez got a
r eye, man, that yez can-
e colleen, or has Dublin
o strange ye don't know

Larry said he never re-
but he felt as if he hadn't
eart left, an' his words
er each other like stones
hill. He knew he had
ut somethin', for Kitty's
; red as the roses on her
e put out her soft little
ı smile that showed two
th as white an' fresh as
an' she said modestly as
ı glad to see any of my
again, Misther M'Cann."
sense enough left to take
e hand she offered; an'
t have given it a hearty
e roses grew on her fore-
itch her cheeks, an' she
t hastily.
owever, kept close to the
' sister; an' when the
e over, an' the people
began to enjoy themselves, an' the dudeens an' the whisky went round to warm the hearts an' the toes, then Larry plucked up his courage an' asked Kitty to tak' the flure with him. Now Kitty was either shy, or her Dublin manners made her too proud to dance at a pattern, so she made excuses. Michael, who had kissed the whisky-jar very lovingly, would not have his friend said "no" to; and so, to *keep Mike in a good humour*, she consinted to dance a jig with Larry.

'Sure, an' it was then he must have won her heart; for they all went back to Enniskerry together, an' she let Larry put his arm round her waist, jist to *howld her on the car*, bekase of the bad roads, an' stale a kiss when he lifted her down at Farmer Quin's garden gate. An' from that out Larry followed Kitty like her shadder.

'But Peter Quin farmed more than two hunderd acres, an' Larry's father only held a hunderd an' twenty, an' that's a good differ, Master Fred. Then Mike an' Kitty wor all the childer Peter had, whilst Larry's brothers—God be praised!—were as thick on the flure as rabbits in a run: wheriver ye turned, yez might tumble over a pig or a gossoon.

'Troth, an' it wasn't long afore the neighbours began to look on Larry as Kitty's bachelor, an' one decaitful ould fellow, who had himself an eye to Kitty's bit of money, gave Peter a hint that Larry was coortin' the lass for the love of her fortin'; tho' sorra a bit had Larry M'Cann so dirty a thought as that same.

'Peter had a temper that was always on the simmer, an' it biled over at wanst. By some ill luck Larry showed his face at the Quins' door before it had time to cool, so Peter thrated him to a thrifle of his tongue, the mane blackguard.

"Div ye think Kitty, the illigant darlint, is for such a poor spalpeen

as yez?" he shouted. "She that's been eddicated in Dublin, an' hez book-larnin', let alone manners, an' a fortin' to the fore! But it's the fortin', I'm thinkin', yez lookin' for wid one eye, an' the girl wid the other, Misther Lawrence M'Cann," he said, with a sneer an' a turn up of his ugly nose.

"It's well for yez, Mr. Pether Quin, that yez Kitty's father, or, by jabers, an' it's showin' ye the taste of this blackthorn I'd be," said Larry on the instant, kaping his passion down with an effort. "Ye may kape your dirty money, bad cess to them as put the black thought of me into yer heart, if ye'll only put Kitty's sweet little hand into mine wid a blessin'."

'You may be sure, miss, as they did not whisper; an' hearin' a row, Mike ran from the barn into the slip of garden forenent the house to join in the fun. He was jist in time to hear his father repate his insult, an' accuse Larry of wanting Kitty's hunderd pounds; an' then Mike fired up, an' took his friend's part like a Trojan.'

'And what's a Trojan, Margaret?' asked Fred demurely, with another sly blink at me.

'Whisht, Masther Fred, an' don't be afther interruptin', or we'll never get to the Good People at all,' said Margaret, ignoring the question.

Thus admonished, Master Fred allowed the story to proceed.

'But Mike could not bring his father to reason, even though he offered him a dhraw of his pipe. More by token, he himself was unwilling to let his sister marry a man who had neither house nor furniture of his own.

"It's not for the likes of her to lay her head undher a father-in-law's roof, an have her childer runnin' over a flure that is not her own," said Mike. "I'd say nothin' agin the match, Larry, if ye had but a farm or a house of yer own, or even the [illegible] of things to make a house dacent [illegible]."

'Larry went away with a very sore heart, miss, you may be sure, for he'd set his very sowl upon Kitty Quin.

'An' sure an' that was the black morning for Larry! Turnin' a corner of a quickset hedge on his way home, who should he come across but Kitty, with a basket of ripe strawberries on her arm, an' she lookin' more temptin' than the fruit.

'Kitty had a tender drop in her heart, and seeing that he was sad, she set herself to discover what it was about; and didn't she regret her curiosity in another minit?—for he poured out all his love an' his sorrow like a great gushin' stream, and held her hand as if he was drownin', an' only that could keep him from sinking quite.

'Taken by surprise, Kitty dropped her basket, an' would have fainted outright, had not Larry put out his arm an' caught her, and that brought her to her siven senses.

'Poor Larry *mistook* her faintness for a sign of her affection, an' in his joy kissed her sweet lips over an' over again. But Kitty soon told him the differ.

'She said she had only fainted from the heat. She was sorry he had mistaken her frindship for a warmer feeling; but though she was ashamed her father should have suspected him of a mercenary motive, she could not encourage his hopes. She should never marry without her father's consint; an' besides, her bringing-up had made her unfit for a farmer's wife, an' so she had determined—yes, determined was the word—never to marry any man who had not a good trade in his hands that would be a livin' either in country or town.

'Every word that Kitty said fell like ice on Larry's hot heart, an' he reeled home as if he had had lashins of whisky; an' when he got there, he took the whisky to drown his sorrow till he wor drunk in arnest.

'There was nobody to tell him of the battle in Kitty's breast between

l pride, nor how she had
› the house by the back way,
herself up, all alone, in her
shed tears like a February
ır the very mischief she had
l the pain in her own breast.
, all the fun an' the frolic in
ıature were murthered that
›rnin'. He went about the
hout a smile on his lip or a
in his eye, an' his mother
ıve it the boy was bewitched.
Father Maguire noticed
ed looks, an' his careless
en he went to mass on the
and the good priest did his
ɜt matters straight, but all
, miss.
: Quin was sorry when his
ras off, but—small blame to
ɜ still thought she might do
an go to the M'Canns' to be
a mother-in-law, an' work
ıve for all Larry's younger

or Kitty, before the feel of
ciss had gone from her lips
ɜn was angry that he had
r at her word; but she fed
age with pride, and put a
ɜ on, though her heart was
tempest of throuble. 'An'
s, there's many and many a
that, although you are too
know it, and I hope never

Margaret looked at me so-
if giving a leaf out of the
her own experience.
fine June morning, when
were in full dhress, an' the
the smell of flowers an'
n hay, Larry went to St.
Market to sell a cow that
ɜ dhry.
ɜ weeks before, an' that
arry would have sung or
every foot of the road, bar-
net a traveller and stopped
aim the time o' day, or ex-
joke. But now he kept
s in his pockets, his chin
his chest, an' his mouth
was as close as a miser's purse. He had a sup of whisky before be left home, to keep his heart up, but fur all that he looked as melancholy as the cow he wor drivin'.

'He had barely got a couple of miles beyant Peter Quin's farm, which lay in his way to Dublin, when he heard a thin weak voice callin' to him, like the wind through a keyhole,

"The top o' the mornin' to you, Larry!"

"The same to you, misther," answered Larry, slowly lifting his eyes, an' then rubbin' them to clear the cobwebs away; for straight across the road was a gate where never a gate had been before, an' sittin' cross-legged on the topmost bar was the queerest little old man Larry had ever seen.

'He was no bigger than a two-year child, but his face was as wizen an' wrinkled as if he was four hundred. He was dressed in an old-fashioned coat an' breeches as green as the grass, had shining buckles in his shoes, and on his head a bright red cap. By all them tokens Larry knew that the little old man was a leprechaun, an' his mouth began to wather for some of the goold he knew the old gintleman must have hid in the ground somewhere about, an' his heart began to thump. But Larry was not the boy to be afraid, so he put a bould face on when the leprechaun, with his head cocked on one side and a knowing twinkle in his eye, said to him,

"That's a fine baste yez drivin', Larry!"

"Troth, yer honour, an' ye may say that same," replied Larry, doffin' his caubeen an' scrapin' his foot, for he thought it best to be civil.

"An' so your dhrivin' the cow to market bekase she's lost her milk; an' ye mane to ax siven pound tin for her!" said the leprechaun with a comical chuckle.

"Bedad, an' I am!" exclaimed Larry, opening his eyes and slapping his thigh in amazement, "an' sure, it's the knowin' old gintleman yer honour is!"

"Thrue for you," said the leprechaun; "an' maybe I know, besides, that Larry M'Cann's goin' to the bad for love of the purtiest girl in Wicklow! But pluck up a sperrit, Larry, don't be cast down. It's I that owe Pether Quin a grudge this many a long day, for his maneness in chatin' the fairies of their due. Niver a fairies' dhrop' (milk left as a propitiatory offering to the Good People) 'is to be found in Pether's cow-house or dairy; and niver a turf or a pratie or a cast-off coat has he for a poor shivering beggar or omadhaun' (idiot), 'bad cess to him! An' so, Larry, I mane to befriend yez, for it's yez that have the warm heart and the open hand, an' we'll back thim against the cowld heart and the tight fist any day!" an' the leprechaun plucked off his red cap and swung it over his head, as if in high glee.

'Larry, with another scrape of his foot, thanked the green-coated old gentleman, an' asked him if he meant to show him where to find a pot of goold.

"Ay, an' that I do; but, Larry," an' here he looked slyer than ever, "the fortin's in your own right hand, man, an' it's I that mane to tache ye to find it there."

'Larry opened his great brown hand, an' turned it over, an' looked in the broad palm.

"Divil a bit I see of a fortin' there," says he.

"Whisht!" says the leprechaun. "Go on wid yer baste, an' when ye meet a man wid his breeches knees untied, an' his coat-tails down to his heels, an' a wisp ov straw in his shoes to kape his toes warm where they peep out ov his stockin's, an' a caubeen widout a brim, thin ye'll know the man that'll bid for yer cow, an' give ye nine goolden guineas for her, not dirty notes."

"Nine guineas! bedad, an' that's more than—" Larry stopped short.

The leprechaun was gone, an' the gate was gone, an' the poor cow walked on as if she had never been stayed.'

'Perhaps she never had,' suggested Fred.

'Now, Masther Fred,' said Margaret, 'if ye interrupt me agin wid yer roguish doubts, *I* shall stop, an' ye'll never hear how it all ended.'

'Go on, Margaret,' urged I, and Margaret obeyed.

CHAPTER II.

'LARRY'S surprise an' the leprechaun's promises drove the thoughts of Kitty out of his head, an' he stepped toward Dublin with something of his ould lightsomeness; when just as he crossed the canal bridge he saw Kitty Quin standin' on her aunt Riley's doorstep in Clanbrassil-street, dressed as illigantly as a lady, an' lookin' as grand an' as proud as a queen.

'Well, Kitty's face went crimson, an' Larry's heart gave a great leap; but she just made him a stiff kind of curtsey, an' the door bein' opened, went in without a word.

"Thim's Dublin manners, I suppose," thought Larry, as he went on, with his heart aching worse than ever; while Kitty, watchin' him from behind the window-blind as far as she could see, felt the tears rowl over her burnin' cheeks, an' then wiped them off angrily, as if ashamed of her natural feelin's, an' blamed herself for being silly.

'Larry hardly knew how he got to the market, but sure enough there he met that same identical man the leprechaun had towld him of. An' more, by token, he made Larry a bid for the cow. He bid eight pound ten, but Larry, heartened beforehand, stuck out for nine guineas; and sure

Larry into a public-house convanient, and took out eches-pocket an owld rag wid string to sarve as a l there an' thin counted ine goolden guineas. Then Larry to have a "dhrop an' to seal the bargain.

s customer called for the ı' offered Larry his own the boy had both the the dhraw, an' then they er dhrop an' a draw; an' ıembered no more till he self lyin' on the grass, wid shining out in honour of er-eve, an' a rushin' in his a great sea.

he heard a rustle as of ' a mighty whisperin', an' self on his elbow to look , an' there he saw hunderds ople no more than a span ɜed in all sorts of queer fashions. But all the had coats of green velvet, of green shamrock in their ɜt the ladies had scarves of ze as fine as cobwebs, an' was wreathed round their ı shone like goold in the

rere all in commotion, run- er an' thither, howlding orses, an' appeared to be ort of throuble or diffi-

tly he saw in their midst ɜt little creature the light , ever flashed on. She was a silver-lily of a car, an' seven-and-twenty grass- ıree abreast. She had a r hand, on which a crystal winkled like a star, an' w at wanst they were all she was their queen.

miss, as they drew nigher ırry heard that one of the ɜs lay dead, an' that they coffin for the berryin'. But offin could they get, for ıs must be made by mortals, or the dead fairies never lie at rest. An' that was what the council an' the confusion wor about.

'Soon Larry heard the fairy queen say in a voice for all the world like the chirp of a cricket, "But who shall make the elf's coffin?"

'All of a sudden at least fifty of the Good People laid howld of him, an' cried out like so many bees humming, "Here's Larry M'Cann, here's Larry M'Cann! it's he will make the coffin."

"But he never handled a saw or a plane in his life; he cannot make a pig-trough, an' how will he finish a coffin fit for an elf?" said one of the good people.

"Sure, thin, an' it's we that must tache him," answered another.

'With that the fairy queen touched him on the forehead, as lightly as if a leaf had dhropped there, with her shining wand, an' it flashed before his eyes till they seemed to strike fire; an' before he could cry out, or ask a saint to purtect him, he felt himself goin' down, down, down, down into the very earth itself; an' it's lost he thought he was for evermore.

'Troth, an' Dublin Castle's but a mud cabin in comparishun with the palace Larry was in when he came to his senses. The walls were brighter than sunshine or rainbows, an' goold, an' silver, an' prechus jewels were as plentiful as praties. There were gardens with trees an' flowers, the likes of which were never in all Ireland, an' the birds were all crimson an' green an' laylock, an' sang sweeter than thrush or nightingale. He seemed to see all this at once, an' many a curious thing beside, which I disremember, and amongst it all the good people were as busy as bees in a hive.

'Almost the first thing he saw was the dead fairy lying on a bed of Indian moss, under a delicate silken quilt, with a tiny wreath of lilies of the valley on his head, and forget-

ticeship that's made me moore
ivin years wiser."
om the day he saw Kitty at
tern, Larry M'Cann had taken
in' his money. It was kept
rock hid under the thatch of
rn, an' there he went quietly
he put a foot on the kitchen
Takin' seven one-pound notes
shillins out, he put the nine
s in, an' took to his father the
e had fixed on the cow.
'here have ye been, ye vaga-
ll this blessed night?" cried
Cann, as the broth of a boy
bright curly head in at the

ll night, father, all night, did
?" cried Larry, bewildered; for
, Master Fred, he thought he
en a week with the good people.
es! all night; for isn't the sun
an' this the blessed Midsum-
y, ye spalpeen? Is it dhrunk
before the dew is off the daisies?
arry, Larry me lad, it's the
way yez goin' ever since Kitty
howed ye the cowld shouldher;
as to the whole lot of them!
here's the price of the baste?
were dhrunk, sure ye'd sinse
take care of that."
, an' sure when he found he
t been more than a night with
ries, he had sense enough left
p his own sacret. His mother
mighty change had come over
but sorra a guess had she
it came from.
e put the potheen aside when
e his way, an' took to the farm
dly, he went about his work
ing, and did as much in one
s he had ever done in two.
he went an arrand to Dublin
he car, an' brought back a lot
penter's tools, an' some dale
. He put them in an old shed
as tumblin' down, unknownst
y one but his brother Pat.
he put a door on the pigsty, to
the pigs out of the house, an'
ded his father to have the
holes in the mud floor of the kitchen filled up; an' conthrived somehow to make the farm dacent and comfortable, with odd bits of improvement here an' there.

'Amongst it all, he an' Pat got the crooked walls of the shed to stand upright, an' mended the thatch, an' put the door again on its two hinges, an' put a lock on the door, widout a word to father or mother. An' then, sure, he conthrived to put up some sort of a carpenter's bench, after the patthern in the fairies' workshop. More wood was got, an' troth, one mornin', to her surprise, Mrs. M'Cann found a new dale table, an' a dresser, an' an aisy-chair in her kitchen, the like of which wasn't in all Enniskerry.

"Sure an' it's illigant, it's fairy work!" said all the neighbours.

"Thrue for you, it *is* the fairies' work," said Larry, with a sly wink at Pat; an' Pat, knowin' what he had seen, an' nothing of the fairies, burst into a loud laugh, an' let out that Larry was the workman.

'No neighbour was more astonished than Larry's own father an' mother. They knew nothing of Larry's friend the leprechaun, nor his fairy teachers; they said the blessed St. Joseph must have put the knowledge in his head, an' called the boy a rale born genius.

'Other farmers' wives envied Mrs. M'Cann her fine dresser, on which a set of new wooden platters an' bickers were ranged, with here and there a bright-coloured crock for show; an' they came beggin' of Larry to make the copy of it for them. So, sure, an' it came about that soon Larry had so much of his new work he was forced to tache two of his brothers the trade, an' build a proper workshop; and Farmer M'Cann had to set the gossoons to work on the farm instead of lounging about an' propping up door-posts all the day.

'But never a bit did Larry

near Kitty all this time, though many a longin' look did he cast that way when he passed Peter Quin's gate. If they met at mass, he just gave her the time o' day, as any other friend might do; but though his very heart was bursting with love, he kept it, like his other saicrets, to himself.

'As for Kitty, there were plenty of bachelors after her, either for herself or her fortin'; but she never got the feel of Larry's kisses off her lips, an' cared more for a glance of his blue eye than for all the bachelors in Wicklow.

'She knew she had sent him away with her proud words, but she would have given all her goold for a whisper of love from him now he had taken her at her word, and seemed to forget her intirely. She just went paler an' thinner, an' when the next midsummer roses were red on the bushes, there were only white ones on Kitty's cheeks.

'Mike and Larry had been fast friends all the time, an' many a job of work Larry did for him on his own account, but sorra a nail would he dhrive for Peter Quin. It was Mike who let Larry into the saicret that owld Corcoran the agent was after Kitty, an' that she had sent him about his business with a sharp word agen his desait in slandering a better man—maning Larry.

'A smart young shopkaiper from Dublin had made her an offer besides, an' even set Molly Mulroony the Blackfoot to thry an' pursuade her.'

'What's a Blackfoot, Margaret?' we asked in a breath.

'Sure, an' a Blackfoot's a matchmaker, a woman as goes between shy lovers an' helps the coortin'.

'Well then, as Larry never went to the whisky-shop, nor to Peter Quin's, Mike found his way to the busy carpenter's shop. He used to ask a power of questions about the work in hand; for I must tell ye, Larry had been so well taught by the Good People, he could turn his hand to cabinet work as well as rough carpentry.

'About this time, Mike saw Larry an' Pat workin' early an' late over furniture not meant for the farmers or gentry about; an' for a wondher, Larry never said a word who they were workin' for. But Pat, the sly rogue, let out as a great saicret that it was fur Larry's own house, agin his weddin'.

"Whare is the house?" says Mike.

"At Bray," says Pat.

"An' who's the sweetheart?" says Mike again.

"Arrah, now, an' that's jist what meself don't know," says Pat in reply.

'Mike went with his news straight to Kitty, who, with bare arms an' tucked-up gown, was makin' butter in the dairy, though she did despise a farmer's life.

'Down went butter an' butter-mould, an' Kitty into the bargain, an' Mike had much ado to bring her out of her faint.

"Kitty," says Mike, when they were all by themselves, "sure an' ye didn't care for Larry, did ye? I thought ye didn't, as ye trated him wid scorn an' contimpt, an' Larry tuk to the dhrink wid the heart-break."

"O, don't, Mike dear, don't! Throth, an' it *was* my own pride an' consait that druv Larry away, an' it's I that have had the heart-break ever since."

"Be me sowl, an' it must be a new sweetheart, an' a cliver lass, that set him agin drink an' made him turn carpenter! Och, Kitty, I'd sooner ye'd had Larry M'Cann than the biggest lord in the land;" an' Mike took out his pipe—his unfailing consoler—for a dhraw an' a think; an' Kitty having no such consolation, he left her sobbin'.

'The next day was Sunday, but Kitty was not at mass. Mike, however, was there, an' Peter, an' Larry

a Dublin tailor could make

's Miss Quin?" asked Larry
of Mike as they walked
ether.
th, an' she might be better,"
Mike; an' says he, quite
"Whin's this weddin' of
come off, Larry?"
ıot settled," says he; "I've
he lady's consint yet."
settled, an' her a lady, an'
se taken, an' your furniture
Bedad, this passes me in-
An' Mike looked hard at
ın' Larry looked at Mike,
ever they saw, they shook
ıd Mike flung up his shillaly
ıt it again, an' danced every
ıe way to their own gate.
ɔe ye wouldn't mind com-
a bit, as Pether's stayed be-
ɔonfession," says Mike with
An' in they went together.
er wor bein' laid in the
ɔut Kitty was in the parlour.
ye're not very well, Kitty,
t I'd betther bring a docthor
:z," says Mike, openin' the

ɔctor!" says Kitty, starting
ɜt, growing crimson an' then
Larry stepped into the
' Mike discraitly shut the
n them, an' being weak she
ıve fainted again, but Larry
er in his arms—an' she got

er waited for Peter, and
aited for Kitty; but Mike
n that Kitty was ill an' the
as wid her, an' they couldn't
bed. But Peter wanted his
dinner, an' grew impatient; an' then Mike towld him that as he had been to confession, Kitty was at confession too, an' that Larry M'Cann was her confessor.

'Sure, Peter was thunderstruck; but he had sinse to see that Larry M'Cann the thrivin' young carpenter was another sort of a man from the Larry M'Cann who worked on his father's farm with scarce a thought of payment; an' Mike soon got his father to give his consint with a blessing.

'The praist followed the doctor in less than a month, but the praist this time was Father Maguire.

'The day before the wedding, Larry took Kitty down to Powerscourt Falls, an' there sittin' with his arm round her slender waist, on the stone under the plane tree where his head had lain, he towld her all about the leprechaun, an' his own apprenticeship to the fairies.

'An' that was how the M'Canns became carpenters.'

Fred and I tried to convince Margaret, that the leprechaun was the result of her grandfather's morning dram, and that under the influence of farther potations he had strayed in safety from the road down the precipitous path to the Dargle, and so on to the Falls; and there sleeping, had dreamt of the fairy funeral.

But Margaret was not convinced; and a few years later the faithful creature died, as firm a believer in fairies as when she told us the story of Larry's apprenticeship, and the fortune he found in his own right hand.

A GOOD HATER

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

'SIR,' said Dr. Johnson, 'I like a good hater!' Philip Rayner used to boast that in this respect he was a man after the great lexicographer's heart. 'I never forgive an injury,' he said, 'and I never forget a kindness.' True, there are certain gracious sentences recorded in the teaching of our Saviour, and treasured in the writings of St. Paul, which do not quite harmonise with Samuel Johnson's dictum; sentences which inculcate an inexhaustible capacity for the pardon of wrongs; precepts which show us how poor a thing it is only to love them who love us. Perhaps Philip Rayner would have been very angry in those early days if any one had disputed his claim to the title of Christian. He went to church once every Sunday; twice sometimes, when the day of rest seemed especially long, and he had nothing better to do with his afternoon leisure; and if he did not listen very attentively to the voice of the preacher, or join with any great fervour in the ritual, he at least offered a good example to the multitude by his well-brushed clothes, spotless linen, and decorous behaviour. He paid his debts to the uttermost farthing, and was not altogether wanting in benevolence, contributing to certain old-established respectable charities in a fair proportion to his income.

The world in which he lived spoke well of Philip Rayner. He was a clever prosperous young man, with a character unsullied by vice, an agreeable personal appearance, and a manner that was very quiet, but not wanting in pleasantness. A thoughtful young man too, who was apt to contemplate all things in their gravest aspect. For the rest he was very happily placed in the world, being the only son of a wealthy leather merchant, who had carried on a prosperous trade for the last forty years in some gloomy old premises in the river-side district beyond the Tower.

His father had educated this only son upon a rough-and-ready principle of his own. No Eton or Harrow, no expensive University education, no riotous career amongst the patrician youth of Oxford or Cambridge, to spoil the lad for commercial pursuits, and a quiet humdrum middle-class life. Old Samuel Rayner sent his boy to a respectable mercantile academy, the principal whereof was instructed to give his pupil a sound mercantile education; no perpetual grinding at the adventures of pious Æneas, no useless grubbing amongst Greek roots, but plenty of book-keeping by double entry, a profound study of tare and tret, and a familiar acquaintance with fractions. This was the kind of teaching Mr. Rayner demanded for his son, and the boy had it. His education seemed to him rather a dull business altogether; but he went through it patiently enough, and finally emerged from the mercantile academy a first-rate arithmetician, a very fair French and German scholar, and a marvel of excellence in the way of penmanship.

Philip Rayner's home life, for the first five years after he left school,

not particularly cheerful. The nan elected to live, where his athers had lived before him, in gloomy mansion adjoining the iess premises of Rayner, Ray- and Sons. The brass-plate on ounting-house door which bore inscription had been old and when Samuel Rayner was a boy, and the Rayner, Rayner, red to thereby were two dryas- brothers, who had worn snuff- ired small clothes, and snuff- ired coats with bright brass ons, and brown George wigs on elderly heads, in the days of great rebellion. They had traded des when Lovat lay in the Tower at hand, these departed gen- en, and now slept side by side in er little old churchyard beneath shadow of the great fortress, a l place that has long been shut Philip Rayner used to stand ie rusty iron gate, and stare ssly in at the nettle-grown es, sometimes of a sultry sum- evening, when he took his ary walks abroad, and was sorely lexed how to dispose of his lei- in that remote City region.

was a dismal home for youth inly, that great gaunt red-brick ion, with its wide ghastly oaken case, where in the twilight it d seem more natural to meet phantasmal lady in a brocaded ie, or some withered gentleman owder and velvet, with silk ings rolled over his knees, than ncounter any modern flesh-and- l creature. Such deep-toned n wainscots; such marvels of l carving over obscure doors in forgotten passages; such and darksome closets in every tion; such a delicious house ether for a connoisseur in old es, but O, such a gruesome to live in!

apply, Philip Rayner was not led with an imaginative tem- nent; he accepted his life very quietly, only thinking that it was rather a dull world upon the whole, and that perhaps his happiest days had been those of his academical existence, with their riotous gambollings in the great playground at Peckham, and their stolen feastings in the dormitories. He thought it rather a hard thing that his father had not a fine country house, with gardens and hothouses, stabling and billiard-room, like other men in his position; but whenever he ventured to argue the point with the old gentleman, he ended by agreeing with his parent that it was a foolish thing for a man to waste all his substance on splendour and show, and to be obliged to face the bankruptcy court in his old age.

'When I die you will be one of the richest men in the leather trade, Phil,' the old man usually wound up by saying; 'and you wouldn't have been that, if I'd sent you to the University, and squandered my income on country houses, and carriages and horses.'

So Philip, not having any extravagant propensities, came to consider things from his father's point of view, and to think that it was, after all, a good thing that they had no splendid suburban mansion at Dulwich or Clapham, Sydenham or Richmond, to absorb the profits of their trade. He came very soon—too soon, considering how young a man he was in these days—to have the same keen interest in savings and investments, for their own sake, that his father had; to thrust his hands deep down in his pockets with a sense of satisfaction when he remembered how little he and his father spent in their quiet City life, and how much there was out at interest, and growing more day by day. He read the money article in the *Times* every morning directly after his father, and the two discussed the state of things on 'Change with never-failing interest.

He grew in time, too, to have a warm liking for that gloomy old house; grew to have prim bachelor ways in advance of his years, and to think it mattered very little where a man lived so long as he was comfortably lodged and well catered for. It was not a mean or sordid household by any means. There was a gray-headed old butler, who had been custodian of the cellars and the massive old plate for the last thirty years, and who would have laid his head on the block in the adjacent Tower rather than compromise the family dignity by any neglect of his duties; there was a housekeeper of fabulous antiquity, who remembered the last hours of the last snuff-coloured gentleman; and there were a couple of prim sour-visaged maidservants of a discreet age, selected by the housekeeper, who, change as they might as to their individuality, never underwent any variation as to those two qualities of primness and sourness.

There was no other woman in the little household. Philip's mother had died years ago, when he was quite a small boy in brown-holland pinafores, and with what seemed to his young mind a perpetual whooping-cough. She was dead. There was a portrait of her in an obscure room opening out of Philip's bedchamber, a picture which had been banished there in the early days after her death, when the bereaved husband could not endure to be reminded of his affliction, and which had never been restored to its place of honour. Philip used to look at this portrait sometimes, wondering what difference it would have made in his life had his mother lived. He felt that there would have been a great difference somehow, but could not divine the nature of it. The face in the picture was a pretty face enough, fair, and girlish, and gentle; but to the son it seemed of an angelic beauty. Perhaps this feeling for the mother, whose living presence he could scarcely remember, was the one touch of romance in Philip Rayner's character.

He was thirty years of age, and had been his father's coadjutor and representative in the business for the last ten years of his life. The father was growing quite an old man now; was subject to severe attacks of gout, which kept him a prisoner to his armchair, much to his aggravation, and Philip was almost sole manager of the business. He consulted his father day by day, it is true, but the consultation was a kind of formula, for Samuel Rayner's brain was beginning to lose its business faculty.

In all these years, since he had left school upon his seventeenth birthday to enter into the proud possession of a stool in his father's counting-house, Philip Rayner had made only one friend. This was a young man who came into the office a little later as corresponding clerk, more especially for the foreign correspondence, which was heavy in the house of Rayner, Rayner, and Sons. The lad was two years younger than Philip, and was little more than a lad, fresh from a German university, when he began his commercial career. His name was George Tolson, and he was the son of a major in a crack regiment, who had made ducks and drakes of a very handsome fortune, and had cut his throat one morning in a fit of delirium tremens, leaving a widow and two helpless orphans to face a life which he had done his best to render hard for them.

Some benevolent friends had come forward to help the forlorn woman, and the boy had been sent to Germany, and the girl to a semi-charitable school for the rearing of officers' daughters; so they had struggled on somehow, until the boy was able to win a livelihood by his industry, and the girl old enough to go out as

rness. The mother had a lodg-
omewhere in an obscure street
ıe Surrey side of the Thames,
here George used to return
' evening when his office duties
over.

ıe friendship between these two
g men did not arise all in a
ent. Philip Rayner was by no
s impulsive, and George Tolson,
gh free and frank as the winds
aven, was too proud to make the
st advance towards the son of
nployer. For some time these
ehaved towards each other with
reme reserve; but they were the
young men in the office, and
by little the ice melted, until
ıintance ripened into friendship.
had few tastes in common.
ge Tolson was much more ver-
, of a brighter and more joyous
e, than his master's son; but
were both young, and that
a bond between them. Nor
his the only link. There were
nstances in George Tolson's life
. awakened a keen interest in
ıind of Philip. He had dis-
ed that George was the chief
rt and devoted companion of
ıother, and he envied him so
r a tie, so precious a duty. He
to walk home with George on
ıer evenings, now and then, and
ng bolder and more familiar by
legrees, would consent by and
drop in upon the widow, and
ı late cup of tea after his walk,
y a game of chess with George
the mother looked on. If he
ossessed the power to help his
in any substantial manner, he
have done it; but he was still
ıtate of tutelage, and Samuel
er thought he did quite enough
ing the young man a liberal
. All that Philip could do was
tify his regard for the widow
h small gifts as he could af-
or the embellishment of her
ly furnished lodging—a plated
rvice—a new chessboard and
men—a pair of china vases for the
mantelpiece, and so on. They were
trifling gifts, but very precious to
Mrs. Tolson, who had not been fa-
voured by such tributes of late
years.

And so the years went on, with a
quiet monotony which was pleasant
enough to Philip, who had no yearn-
ing for change. He and George used
to walk together a great deal in those
long summer evenings, late into the
autumn even, when lamps were
flaming in the misty streets, or in
the cold spring nights, when a great
wind blustered in every open space
and at every street corner. There
was not a nook in the old City they
left unexplored in these evening
rambles, only now and then pushing
their way beyond that labyrinth of
brick and mortar to some heathy
hillside out north, or rural-look-
ing common in the south. They
were very happy together, George
full of wild reckless talk about lives
that were different from theirs; lives
of adventure in distant lands, lives
in camp and on board ship, tossed
about by the winds and waves, and
in frequent contest with savage foes;
the kind of life he longed to lead,
in short, instead of that dryasdust
life of the counting-house, which
might go on for ever, and leave him
no better man than he was now.

'You get an increase of salary
every year, you know, George!' sug-
gested the practical Philip. 'It's not
such a bad thing, after all. And if
you stick to business, by and by,
when we are both middle-aged men,
I may be able to give you a junior
partnership.'

'Yes, I know you're very good,
old fellow, and the governor is very
good, and I'm altogether better off
than I deserve. But you see I don't
think I was intended for that sort
of life. There's too much of my
father's blood in me. The Tolsons
have been soldiers time out of mind.
If it hadn't been for my mother, I

should have enlisted ever so long ago.'

He looked very handsome as he said this, with his hat off, and his waving auburn hair blown off his forehead by the light summer wind. The two young men were sitting on an old bulkhead in a deserted wharf above the swift-flowing river, a pleasant solitary spot enough in the heart of the great City, and a favourite resting-place with them after a long ramble.

Yes, he was very handsome, in a noble picturesque style. One could fancy that the blood of fighting Cavaliers, rebellious Jacobite gentlemen of the old time, ran in his veins. There was an ardour and fulness of life about him not common to modern commercial youth. The bright blue eyes used to light up with a sudden fire when he was vehement, the flexible lips had a hundred mutations of expression. He was a striking contrast to his friend in this, whose dark good-looking face underwent few changes. A solid square forehead, deep-set grave gray eyes, a firm mouth, and a clear dark skin were the distinguishing marks of Philip Rayner's physiognomy.

A change came in Philip's life soon after this — a change which seemed to make a new man of him, from which he afterwards dated the beginning of another existence. It was as if a door had opened and shut upon all the life that had gone before, and he had passsed out of that close narrow atmosphere into a new world; a world of light, and air, and sunshine, that was brighter and fairer than anything he had ever known or dreamt of before. In plain words, Philip Rayner fell in love.

It happened one morning that the old dealer in hides took less interest than usual in the money article, laid aside his particular portion of the *Times* with a long-drawn sigh, and sat gazing meditatively at the fire in so fixed an attitude, and with such a rapt countenance, that Philip laid down his paper too, and looked at his progenitor wonderingly.

'Is there anything amiss, father?' he asked.

'No, no, Phil, no; nothing amiss, nothing amiss. The fact is, I've had a letter.'

'Some very particular letter, I suppose?' the younger man hazarded anxiously.

'Yes, a particular letter, Phil, in a hand I never thought to see again in this world; a letter from the dead.'

'What do you mean, father?'

'When I married your mother, Philip, it wasn't exactly to be called a love match, though I was fond of her then, and grew to be fonder of her afterwards, poor soul. But I had been in love before, and she knew it. I was in love with a first cousin of mine, an orphan girl, that my father and mother had brought up on charity. You'd laugh at me, I daresay, if I were to tell you how I loved that girl; for such things sound foolish when a man is old and feeble, with one foot in the grave. But I loved Catherine Marsh with all my heart and soul. The old people were dead against our marrying at first, seeing that Catherine was no better than a pauper, as they said; but they were fond of her in spite of their talk, and finding that my heart was set upon the business, my father gave way, and of course my mother didn't hold out after him. It was all settled. I fancied myself the happiest man in Christendom. Well, Phil, it's an old story, and common enough. She jilted me. She never had loved me, I suppose. However that was, she ran away with an Italian fellow called Paroldi, Joseph Paroldi, who taught my sister Rosa singing; an idle scapegrace, with nothing in his favour but a handsome face and a specious taking manner. She ran

th him one morning, leaving
nt little note for me, to say
e had turned Catholic some
'ore, and that they had been
at the Roman-catholic
in Moorfields.'
at a heartless hussey!' cried
'You never could forgive
achery as that, father.'
l, Phil, it was a hard thing
an to forgive, wasn't it? I
ious against her at first, and
if I could have killed her if
l come across my path in
ays. But little by little I
think of her differently, re-
ing what a young thing she
y just turned eighteen, when
ried that scoundrel, and re-
looks and words of hers that
ited at some secret trouble
g upon her mind, until I
o believe that she had strug-
rd to be true to me, and had
anted to tell me all. So,
, it ended by my forgiving

p Rayner shrugged his shoul-
th an involuntary expression
empt for his father's weak-

ould never have brought my-
do that,' he said.
, you think not, Phil,' ans-
he old man, 'you think not;
en a man has once loved a
, her face is always rising up
him, pleading to him to think
y of her, let her have treated
badly as she may. It always
ith his forgiving her. The
y of the days when he thought
ed him is too much for his
d. It always ends so.'
would never end so with me,'
ed the young man, clenching
vindictively. 'Nothing upon
rth could induce me to for-
woman who had jilted me.
w about the letter you talk
er, and what has that to do
is old story?'
is from her, Philip, from Catherine Marsh — Catherine Paroldi; the last letter she ever wrote. She is dead. Another hand tells me that at the end of the letter; her daughter's. She is dead, and has left one child, a girl, the last of a large family, all dead but this one. Paroldi took her out to the West Indies, it seems, where they did well enough for many years, but had much sorrow, the climate killing their children one after another; the last of the flock lived, that was all. Then came reverses; the man's health failed him, and ten years ago he died. After that the poor soul kept herself and her child by teaching. She was always a sweet musician, with a voice as clear and fresh as the skylark's, and I think it was that fellow's music tempted her away from me. And so she got on somehow, she says in her letter, till she felt death close at hand; and then, not having one wealthy friend in the world whose bounty she could entreat for her child, except myself, and knowing that I was a good man, she says, poor soul, she turns to me, beseeching me for Christian charity, if not for the memory of those days when I loved her—when did I not love you, my sweet cruel Catherine?—to befriend her orphan daughter. She does not ask me to do much for the girl; not to adopt her, or maintain her in a life of idleness; only to put her into some way of making an honest living, and to keep her from falling into dangerous hands. The letter came by hand this morning. The girl is in London. What am I to do, Phil? You are the master now, as I take it. Whatever I save is saved for you; whatever I spend is so much out of your pocket. What shall we do with Catherine Paroldi? She has been christened after her mother, Catherine.'

'It is hard for a woman to get her living nowadays,' Philip answered thoughtfully; 'a young woman

too, and a foreigner, as you may say. A girl's keep costs next to nothing. She might live here, surely, father. Mrs. Dorkin would take good care of her.'

'Yes, that would be well enough for the girl, for the time. But by and by; she must get her living by and by, Phil.'

'She would be better used to English ways, after a year or two. And you would leave her a trifle, I daresay, father.'

'I don't know about that; it's generous of you to think of it, Phil.'

Philip Rayner was not ungenerous. He liked the idea that the profits of the business were yearly increasing, and that there was money being sunk from time to time, of which he must needs be master by and by. But he was not a miser, and he did not care about spending money. His narrow life had crippled his imagination in that respect. He had no yearning for the follies or pleasures upon which the spendthrift wastes the hard-earned thousands of his forefathers.

Catherine Paroldi came to the old house near the Tower. A tall slim slip of a girl, with a very dark complexion, browned by West Indian suns; not lovely to look upon, by any means, Philip thought at first, but with eyes of wondrous power and beauty, as he came to understand before long, and with a tender half-pleading, half-bewitching manner, not long to be resisted by the heart of man.

She was not very gay at first, this friendless orphaned girl of seventeen years old, for the shadow of a great sorrow was still upon her; yet she brightened the old house by her presence in a greater degree than Philip Rayner could have imagined possible. It was a new thing to come home and see her sitting in the grim wainscoted parlour; it made his coming home something different from what it had been. He used to be startled by finding himself thinking of this dark-eyed Catherine sometimes in business hours, when he had a file of accounts or a ponderous ledger before him. The days seemed longer to him than of old, and he wondered at his eagerness to go home to the quiet dinner and long quiet evening, when Catherine sat at a little table near the old man, busy with some complicated piece of embroidery, for which, with all other delicate kinds of fancy work, she had an especial genius.

There would be no difficulty about her getting her own living by and by, Samuel Rayner said, seeing how industrious the girl was. Philip thought that she might never have any occasion to earn a living for herself. It would have seemed a hard thing for one so tender and gentle to be turned adrift upon a cold cruel world. And what could they do without her in that dreary old house, having once known the magical brightening influence of her presence? She had a hundred little arts by which a woman can embellish the dullest home, and little by little, as she found herself privileged to do these things, exercised her pretty trivial arts. Quaint old china jars and bottles, and cups and teapots, that had been hidden away in remote cupboards, blackened with the dust of ages, came out of their hiding-places, and were placed about, here and there, making patches of light and colour in the darksome rooms. The ponderous old furniture was polished into a kind of beauty, and by a new disposition of old material she brought light and air into gloomy corners. Flowers bloomed here and there in the windows, and a pair of pet birds of gay plumage, which she had brought with her from Trinidad, enlivened the family parlour. There was a new atmosphere in the house, somehow, and Philip felt the change keenly.

Perhaps at this time Mr. Rayner

Henry French, del. J. R. Battershell, sc.

PHILIP AND CATHERINE MEET AGAIN.

ger did not care quite so the society of his chosen orge Tolson. It was mid- ıd there was considerable ır the suspension of their ambles; but Philip felt that ıt treating his friend quite d in order to make some nvited him home to dinner vice a week. The old man ıbjection to his company; as quite master now.

r be that Philip wanted to therine Paroldi's praises lips of the friend whose he believed in. He was gratified when George spoke ıuty of her dark eyes, and ı of her singing. She had ɜ key of the old-fashioned ano in a corner of the par- piano at which her father ht Miss Rayner singing; ang and played to her be- and his son sometimes of ıg. Her voice was a clear soprano, her touch upon full of tenderness and feel- e sang all the old English hich Samuel Rayner loved, talian music of the best ch her father had taught she was quite a child.

was no musician. He had gue consciousness of melody rine's singing. It was a soothing influence for him; elancholy, perhaps, awaken- n sense of sadness in his hat was all. He would have distinguished one of from another, without the He felt this deficiency of keenly when George Tol- vith them, for George had ritone voice and consider- for music, and would sing vith Catherine very often. l to bring those two closer and for the first time Phi- pang of jealousy. He was h himself for the feeling, a great effort to overcome it, asking his friend to the old house all the oftener, because of this secret weakness.

'What fear need I have of him, if she loves me?' he argued with himself; 'and if not, what can it matter whom she sees? But I think she loves me; yes, I believe she loves me.'

He thought she loved him. He had some justification for so thinking, undoubtedly. The girl was of a confiding affectionate disposition, and was deeply grateful to these friends who had given her a home. Perhaps in her eagerness to prove her gratitude, in all the trivial ways that lay in her power, she may have been dangerously kind to her cousin, watching for every little opportunity of giving him pleasure, deferring to his wishes with a sweet childlike submission, going out to meet him with bright welcoming looks when he came home, making his life altogether bewilderingly happy, to the peril of his peace.

She was quite different to George Tolson. Philip saw the difference, and the fact of it added much to his happiness. To George her manner was reserved, singularly cold and distant, Philip thought; she took no pains to please him, and never betrayed any pleasure in his presence. No, there was no fear of George.

So the days and weeks drifted on, with a gentle monotony that would have been irksome to restless spirits; but Philip's life was a new life, and he wondered how he could ever have existed in a world unbrightened by Catherine Paroldi. Little by little, she who had been unlovely at first, grew to be most beautiful in his sight. The tawny hue of her skin faded in the cool English atmosphere, leaving her pale and fair, like a white lily. Her smile grew radiant as her spirits improved, and lighted up the pale face with a kind of glory, like the light in an old altar-piece, where it all comes from one divine face; a

mere trick of art, perhaps, but with a lovely meaning in it.

Philip was in no hurry to urge his suit. His was a reserved nature, with much latent pride beneath a quiet manner. He watched her closely, and fancied himself secure of her love. He had only to speak when the fitting time came; she must know how much he loved her. In the mean while, all his dreams were of a future in which she was to be his wife. He could not think of himself for a moment apart from her. The possibility that this desire of his heart might be denied him never entered into his mind.

And so the time went on in the old house near the Tower with a profound peacefulness, George Tolson coming very often in the lengthening spring evenings, almost their only visitor. The three young people used to walk together of an evening in the empty city streets sometimes, as the weather grew milder, Catherine arm-in-arm with her cousin, George Tolson walking by her side, expounding curious scraps of archæological lore about the churches and quaint old buildings of divers kinds hidden in the narrow streets and lanes by which they went.

So the time went on until there came a sudden break in this monotonous life for Philip Rayner. His father insisted upon his going on a round among their customers in the north of England. There were details in the management of the trade that wanted revision and rearrangement. There had been numerous complaints of late from provincial customers; prices must be lowered to meet the march of the times. It was altogether a delicate business, requiring the exercise of commercial diplomacy, and necessitating, Samuel Rayner said, the presence of a principal.

He was surprised to find his son disinclined for the performance of this duty; anxious to delegate it to a clerk; in fact, anything rather than to go himself. But upon this point the old man was absolute. Roused by a threatened danger to his house, he showed himself as keen a man of business as in his best days. Rayner, Rayner, and Sons must show themselves prompt to satisfy the demands of the times. His son Philip must go, and none other. So Philip went. It was only a business of a month or six weeks, yet he felt as if the very mainspring of his life was broken when he turned his back upon the familiar old house.

He never forgot that parting. He was to go by the night mail, and it was a calm airless evening early in May when he left his father's house. Catherine came to the hall-door to bid him good-bye. For the first time in his life he kissed her. Just at the last, when his portmanteau had been put on the roof of the cab, and the old butler was standing on the doorstep talking to the driver, Philip took his cousin in his arms, and kissed her on the lips. It was one long passionate kiss, and he fancied that it was at once the declaration and the seal of his love. She could not misunderstand him after that; she was his own from that moment.

Catherine Paroldi gave a little cry of astonishment or reproof, and ran back to the parlour. There was not a moment to lose. Philip sprang into the cab, and drove off. He saw her for an instant at the open window watching him, with the evening sun upon her face. That picture —the pale young face, the shadowy eyes, and loose brown hair, framed in the window—haunted him all through the long night journey. The memory of that one unpremeditated kiss haunted him too, the seal which he had set upon his love.

The six weeks were dragged out into two months. People in the

slow, and Philip Rayner
ıt many places to visit.
:e undertaken the busi-
as determined to do it
and he found matters
ıemselves easily and plea-
gh, by the exercise of his
fluence and a little judi-
·ality. Altogether his
ı a successful one.
he end of June when he
face homewards; bril-
r, and the country through
went looking its fairest.
Rayner did not think
e verdant summer world
ıich he was travelling.
ts sped on before him to
his journey. How would
him, Catherine, his idol?
hes and shy downcast
o, he scarcely thought
ı had been no blush upon
ıt looked out at him from
indow. How would she
ı, his darling, his own?
own from the moment
e had pressed that pas-
s upon her unresisting

letters from home had
her; dear little letters
all the trivial news of
ıse, his father's talk of
lank caused by his ab-
et womanly letters, which
ght have written to a bro-
never thought of that.
y were the letters of his
fe.
ast few days he had heard
His movements just at the
n uncertain. But he had
il, or that he should find
ı in his dull peaceful

eginning to grow dusk
ıb drew up at the familiar
ts carved wooden canopy
liam and Mary period,
by two chubby-faced
Looking eagerly up at
use, a great shock fell
upon him. The blinds were all drawn closely down in the still summer evening. His first thought was of his father — his first thought was of the truth. The old man was dead.

The ancient butler opened the door, and received his new master with a solemn face—a face in which there was real grief, for the man had loved his employer of so many years.

'There never was a better master or a better man,' he said, with something like a sob. 'Yes, Mr. Philip, we've lost him. He fell down in a fit just after breakfast, though he'd read his newspaper and everything just the same as usual, and he never spoke again, poor dear gentleman. There was as many as four doctors with him at one time, for Miss Paroldi wouldn't believe as there was no hope; but they could do nothing for him. There was a telegram sent to you at Sheffield the night before last. You got it, didn't you, sir?'

'No; I left Sheffield last week. I came here straight from Hull. Let me go to his room, Jackson; I should like to see him at once.'

'He looks as calm as a sleeping baby, God bless him! I'm very glad you've come home, sir. There's many things about the funeral we couldn't settle without you. I told the undertaker I knew you'd have everything of the handsomest, but of course I could say no more than that.'

Philip went upstairs to the solemn death-chamber, a long oak-panelled room, with four tall narrow windows, which had been gloomy enough even when inhabited by the living. He had scarcely known until this moment how much he loved his father, or how bitter a blow their parting was to be. For the time, even the image of Catherine Paroldi was blotted from his mind. He stopped in that darkened room for a long while, nearly an hour, and then went slowly downstairs in the deep-

ening summer dusk. Day was not quite ended even yet, though the early stars were shining faintly through the long staircase window as he went down.

There was a lamp burning dimly in the hall. Catherine came out of the parlour, very pale, and dressed in black; it was one of the black dresses she had worn in memory of her mother. She gave him her hand, looking at him with a grave pitying face.

'I am so sorry for you, cousin Philip,' she said; 'so sorry for my own sake, too. I loved him very dearly. Indeed, I had good reason to love him,' she added, breaking down with a little choking sound.

They went into the parlour, and sat there in mournful silence till very late, only saying a few words now and then. On the next day Catherine told Philip all about his father's last moments, about that last breakfast too, when he had been quite himself, and had talked as cheerfully as ever he had done within her knowledge of him, speaking of his son's approaching return, and looking forward with evident pleasure to that event.

Two days afterwards came the funeral, a stately ceremonial; for Philip Rayner chose this conventional mode of testifying to his respect for the dead man, as the only manner in which he could exhibit such a feeling to the eyes of the commonplace world in which his father had lived. The City churchyard wherein the Brothers Rayner lay buried had long been closed, so the old man's bones were carried to Norwood Cemetery, by and by to rest under a handsome and appropriate monument.

It was with profound sadness in his heart that Philip rode homewards through the summer sunlight, and amidst the busy life of suburb and city, when all was over, and the dreary day's work done. No, all was not quite over. There was the will to be read, a ceremony which did not involve much anxiety or heartburning; for Samuel Rayner had not many relatives, and those he left behind him were, with the exception of Catherine Paroldi, wealthy traders settled in remote colonies. There was no one but Philip and the two old servants, Mrs. Dorkin the housekeeper and Jackson the butler, to hear the reading of the will, which was read with all due solemnity by the family solicitor, in the grim darksome dining-room, a spacious chamber only used on state occasions.

The will was an old one, dated six years ago, and worded in a very simple manner. The old man left an annuity to each of his faithful servants, a mourning ring or so to the distant traders, a small legacy to the doctor who had attended him for some thirty years of his life, and all the rest to his only son. There was nothing for Catherine Paroldi. The will had been executed before Samuel Rayner knew of the girl's existence, and there was no codicil.

It mattered very little, Philip thought. All that he had would be Catherine's. It was time for him now to speak plainly; the dear girl must not have an hour's doubt as to the security of her position. He would speak to her that very evening. There was no indecency, no lack of reverence for the dead, in such promptitude. Philip fancied that his marriage with Catherine would have been the desire of his father's heart. The old man must have surely foreseen their union, or he would never have left Catherine Marsh's daughter penniless.

The cousins sat alone together that evening, after a dinner of which neither had eaten anything. It was a warm sunny midsummer evening, and the faint hum of the declining City life came to them through the open windows with a distant drowsy

The old house had that as-
profound dulness peculiar to
tation in the heart of a city
ummer evening, when man-
as a natural yearning for the
freedom of the hill-side, and
green leaves in the wood-
Philip had no such yearning
t, however. To him the
y oak-panelled room was par-
He forgot that he had seen
d old father laid in the grave
y; he could think of nothing
therine's pensive face as she
the open window, with the
stern sunlight shining upon
it had shone on the evening
he kissed her. The words
he had to speak did not come
very easily; he loved her
ch to be over bold. But in
st happy hour of his youth
as no shadow of doubt in his
He had never contemplated
sibility of a refusal on Cath-
part; he had never told him-
t he might have a rival; he
ver doubted that she loved
In perfect faith he had ac-
her grateful affection, her
sisterly regard, as an earnest
love that was to be given to
hen he pleaded for it. He
ther ashamed of himself for
been so backward in plead-
t was all.

herine,' he said at last, draw-
chair nearer hers, 'I have
ing to say to you.'

had been working busily un-
moment, but she laid aside
rk as he spoke, and turned
m pensive face towards him.

d I want to speak to you,
she answered, blushing a
rosy red all of a sudden.
is something I have been
to say for the last three
but I hadn't the courage.
t I know how good you are,
t nothing in the world could
ou unkind to me.'

ely not, my dear. Unkind
to *you*, Catherine! How could I ever be that?'

'Of course not; and that's why it has been so foolish in me to feel afraid of speaking frankly. I think you must know how happy and peaceful my life has been in this dear old house, cousin Philip, and how grateful I must ever be to you and your dear father for all your goodness to me, but—but—we are both young, and it would not do for us to go on living here together. People would think it strange. Mrs. Dorkin told me as much a day or two ago—and the evening after cousin Samuel's death I had the offer of a new home. Don't think me ungrateful, pray, cousin Philip, or that I want to run away from you. Indeed, I cannot fancy a sister loving her only brother better than I love you, but I must go away — every one says that.'

She looked at him just a little anxiously, the blush fading slowly away from the sweet face.

'A new home! Why should you go away, Catherine? What need you care if some malicious fool should slander us? It is hardly possible for malice to go so far as that; and it can matter so little to us, for—' And then, without finishing the sentence, he exclaimed, 'The offer of a new home, Catherine! What home?'

'Mrs. Tolson — George's mother —has asked me to stay with her till—till I am married.'

She was blushing again by this time, and the heavy lids drooped over the glorious dark eyes.

'Till you are married!'

'Yes, cousin Philip. I ought to have told you sooner, perhaps, but it happened while you were away, and it seemed such a stupid thing to write about, somehow. George Tolson has asked me to be his wife, and—and—I love him very dearly—and we are to be married in a month or two. We shall not be rich,

course, for George has his mother to keep—that is his first duty—but we can live happily on a very little, we love each other so truly.'

The ghastly change in her cousin's face stopped her suddenly in the midst of her innocent confession.

'Cousin, dear cousin Philip,' she exclaimed, 'you are not angry?'

'Angry!' cried the young man; 'you have broken my heart. What, didn't you know that I loved you? didn't you know that every hope I had was built upon the security of your love? When I kissed you that night I went away, if you had doubted before, could you doubt then what I felt for you?'

'Indeed, Philip, I thought it was only a cousin's kiss. We have been like brother and sister; I never dreamt you cared for me more than you might have cared for a sister.'

'Of course not!' Philip Rayner cried, with a bitter laugh. 'What is easier than to say that? And he, the scoundrel, the traitor, the false friend I brought to this house, the sneaking villain who came into our firm a beggar—he to go behind my back and steal you!'

'Stop, Philip! I cannot hear you say those things of him. What right had he to suppose that you cared for me? It is too cruel, too unjust; dear cousin, be reasonable, be like yourself. Whatever sin I have committed against you has been done in ignorance. I shall never cease to be grateful to you; never cease to feel affectionately towards you. Be generous, cousin Philip; tell me that you forgive me.'

'Forgive you!' cried the man, in a blind fury. 'To the last hour of my life—if I live to be a hundred years old—I will never speak to you again! I pray God I may never see your face any more!'

And with those words upon his lips he went out of the room, went away from her, with a sullen determination to hate those two who had wronged him until the end of his days.

He left the house at once, and roamed away into the dreariest outskirt of the City, a desert tract where there were buildings newly begun, abandoned skeletons of houses, and a wide margin of brickfields. All the night through he rambled about this dismal region, with a fever in his brain, and no consciousness of fatigue, no consciousness even of the scene around him. If any one had told him he had been walking on the shore by some roaring sea, he could only by circumstantial evidence have perceived the falsehood involved in the assertion.

It was in the broad summer sunshine that he went home; his clothes whitened with dust and stained with the night dews, his face wan and haggard. Labourers going to their work in the early morning stopped to stare at him as he passed them. One of the sour-faced maid-servants was cleaning the doorstep when he went in, and gazed at him aghast, but he scarcely saw her. He washed himself and changed his clothes with a half-mechanical sense of the proprieties, and then went down to that every-day parlour which had a little while ago seemed to him such a pleasant home-like room. There was a solitary-looking breakfast-table laid for one; and instead of Catherine Paroldi's presence there was a little note addressed to Philip Rayner; a tender pleading little letter, assuring him once again of her gratitude for his goodness to a friendless orphan, beseeching him once more to be generous and forgiving, and telling him that, let him act towards her as he would, she would never cease to be his grateful and affectionate Catherine.

He read the letter three times with a fierce hungry look in his face, a rage of mingled hate and love, then crushed it in his hand and flung it into the empty grate. And

done that he determined to
ıence his life upon a new
; to shut that false girl's
out of his mind, to devote all
ırgies and all his thoughts to
s.

first letter he wrote when he
ated himself at his desk in
vate counting-house, for the
me since his journey, was a
pistle to George Tolson, in-
g him that his services were
ger required, and that if he
ed any pecuniary compensa-
stead of the ordinary term of
such a course would be more
ole to the feelings of his obe-
ervant, Philip Rayner.

answer to this was prompt
. It told the new chief of
', Rayner, and Sons, that Mr.
required neither notice nor
ısation, and that he should
mitted the office for ever be-
s note could be delivered to
ıyner.

will find another situation, I
e,' Philip said to himself, 'for
ıundrel is clever. He had a
d and fifty a year with us;
. scarcely get so much else-
At best it can only be gen-
ggary, a perpetual struggle
re existence. And what is
hat I could have denied her
had married me? She will
f that sometimes, surely.'

far Philip Rayner succeeded
ting out the image of the girl
l loved was best known to
f. From the hour in which
her on the night of his fa-
'uneral he never spoke of her
o any human creature. What-
ırıosity he may have felt as
fate, he kept locked in his
east, making no attempt to
r what became of her.

as from this time forth that
ke of himself as a good hater.
l a kind of sullen pride in his
of George Tolson and Cathe-
rine Paroldi. And yet, as it has been said before, he would, no doubt, have called himself a Christian. He had always been a good man of business, but from the hour of his disappointment he devoted himself to the dryasdust labours of his daily life with a new energy. His father had left him a rich man, and every year added to his wealth, while his expenses diminished instead of increasing. The faithful butler retired to live upon his savings and his dead master's legacy in a congenial retreat beyond Wapping, and Philip made no attempt to supply his place. He was waited upon after this by the middle-aged housemaid, who had amassed money in the savings-bank and acquired some distinction in a community of Primitive Methodists, whose place of worship was in a darksome lane near the East India docks. He was quite content with this reduction of his former state. It was a means of saving money, and he had a stolid satisfaction in the accumulation of his wealth.

The years passed, and he lived on, without change of any kind, in the dull old city house. Friends he had none. The only man he had ever made a companion was George Tolson. Acquaintances of course he had in the way of business—people who thought well of him, and would fain have had him for a guest at their houses, but he refused all invitations. The gloomy solitude of the old house near the Tower best suited his gloomy humour. People asked him sometimes why he did not buy a place at Clapham or Dulwich or Norwood, and live more in accordance with his fortunes; he always told them, with the same dreary smile, that he did not care for the country, he was fond of London. One day a bolder spirit than the rest asked him plainly why he had never married. The dark lo
with which Philip Rayner answer

the question put an effectual stop to all farther inquiries upon *that* head.

So his life went on, buying and selling, and daily growing richer; coming home every day to the same lonely room; eating and drinking sparingly in solitude; sitting alone through the long evening with a neglected book lying on the table before him, or wandering alone in the familiar streets and in the suburban roads that he had trodden long ago with George Tolson; and for any pleasure or variety there was in his life he might as well have been some wretched galley slave, toiling under the sunshine of southern France. So the years went by, and brought him no tidings of those he hated, no mutation in his own monotonous life. It was ten years after she had left his house when he saw Catherine Paroldi, or Catherine Tolson as, of course, she must be now. She flashed past him one winter's afternoon at dusk in a crowded city street, a tall slim figure dressed in black, with great dark eyes and a wan face. It was only when she had passed him some moments that he knew, by the quickened beating of his heart, who it was that had been so near to him. He turned, and would fain have followed her, impelled by a strange curiosity to learn the circumstances of her life, but she was lost in the crowd by the time he had recovered himself so far as to be able to look about for her.

Great heaven, how her face haunted him after that November twilight! She was poor—he was sure of that; he had read as much even in his brief glimpse of that wan face; poor and careworn, alone in the city street; jostled by the crowd, hurrying homeward to some sordid refuge; *she* for whom life should have been one bright holiday, had she chosen to be his wife. He laughed aloud as he thought of his money, and the home he could have given her. Not that dull city mansion which served well enough for him, but a suburban palace set in a fairyland of gardens, carriages, lackeys, diamonds to crown the pale brow. O God, how different life might have been for both of them had she but loved him! He hated her with a double hatred as he thought of what they had each lost; hated her for the wrong done to herself as well as for the wrong done to him.

He took out his bank-book that night, the modest parchment-bound volume in which a prosperous trader is apt to find a more soothing influence than in the brightest dreams of poets, or the most profound philosophising of sages. Yes, a loose thousand or two had accumulated since he had last taken a survey of his affairs; a little more to invest in some safe and profitable way, in India bonds or unimpeachable railway debentures. A couple of thousand pounds! and that poor pinched face of hers had looked as if a ten-pound note would have been a boon to her.

'I never thought that George Tolson would succeed in life,' Philip Rayner said to himself that night, 'he was too volatile. Clever, I admit, but with that sort of superficial cleverness which seldom helps a man to make a fortune.'

From that time forward the face that had flashed past him in the crowded street was always with him. She had haunted him before in her girlish grace and beauty; she came before him now like the sad shadow of some wandering soul in Hades, and still he told himself that he hated her. What was her poverty to him? If she had been on her knees before him pleading for help, he would have been deaf as stone to her prayers. She had chosen for herself; let her abide the issue.

It was more than a year after this when he saw the man who had once been his friend, George Tolson.

two men met at an obscure
t corner near the Royal Ex-
ge, Philip returning from an
able visit to his stockbroker's,
ther emerging suddenly from a
c-house, a gaunt shabby figure,
a haggard unshaven face.
faint flush lit up the careworn
as the man recognised the son
old employer, and he made as
would have spoken to him;
'hilip Rayner brushed past him
urried on, very pale, and with
k forbidding countenance. No,
was nothing but hatred in his
for this man. George Tolson
d after him, irresolute, for a
te or so, then gave a heavy
and walked slowly on. What-
vague hope might have im-
l him to approach that some-
friend died out at sight of the
ngry face.
us Philip Rayner twice lost
pportunity of discovering the
of these two people who had
been so much to him.
d yet there were times when
uld have given the world to
how they fared; whether they
drained the cup of misfortune
e very dregs, and whether Ca-
e repented the sacrifice she
nade. Do what he would, work
rd as he would, he could not
h her from his thoughts. The
mplation of his own prosperity
pleasant thing enough, but
d face came between him and
mage of the golden calf which
d set up for himself. Was he
for her? No, surely not. He
ot made of the stuff to forgive
a wrong as he had suffered.
as a good hater.

other year had gone, and Philip
er was forty years of age. It
is birthday; a dull sunless day
October, with a cruel easterly
blowing all day long. Rather
ary occasion a birthday for a
who stands quite alone in the
world. No one congratulated Philip Rayner upon this completion of another year in his life, not even his servants, for he had long ago dropped all ceremonial on such anniversaries, and no bottle of wine was opened in the kitchen for the drinking of the master's health. He was a man who abjured all sentiment, and yet his loneliness, his utter isolation, did strike him just a little painfully upon this particular day. And it must needs be always so, for all the years to come. He had not a friend in the world. He might live forty years more, and see forty more such birthdays, in the same dull old house, in the same death-like silence and solitude. For the first time he felt as if those grim panelled walls were horrible to him. They seemed to close in upon him like the walls of a vault. He started up from his fireside in a sudden paroxysm of despondency, and hurried out of the house. Once in the open air, it mattered to him nothing where he went. The clocks were striking seven, and the traffic of the day was for the most part over. He had the streets almost to himself. It was a supreme relief to him to have left that silent shadowy parlour, always haunted now by the ghost of what once had been, and to be out under the open sky. He walked on, careless where he went; crossed London-bridge, and made his way far out by obscure streets and bye-roads till he found himself in a dismal neighbourhood beyond Walworth—a bleak barren outskirt, where there was a ghastly patch of waste ground that had once been a common, hemmed in by shabby streets of new-built houses, the greater part of which seemed to be still untenanted.

The exploration of these sordid streets afforded some kind of amusement to Philip Rayner. Perhaps it was pleasant to him to contrast the squalor which prevailed in this small obscure world, making itself

manifest in a hundred trivial ways, with his own prosperous condition. If he had no one else to wish him joy upon his birthday, he could at least congratulate himself upon his wealth, and wonder how these people endured the burden of their existence; he who, an hour ago, had rushed out of his comfortable home, unable to bear the sudden agony of its solitude, the thought of all the monotonous joyless years that he was to live in it.

The dwellers in this region were, at least, not lonely. Wherever he caught a glimpse of a lighted room, he saw a family group assembled. He heard children's voices here and there through open doors, or a couple of matrons gossiping sociably on a doorstep. These wretched creatures seemed almost happy in spite of their poverty. It gave him an angry feeling to think that it was so; that so little was needed for happiness, and that he had missed it.

He turned presently into a darker and lonelier street than the rest, where there were more empty houses and an air of desolation more profound than anything he had seen elsewhere. Yet the houses were better and larger than those in the neighbourhood, with little bits of garden ground before them.

Here all was so silent that Philip Rayner could hear the low suppressed sobbing of a child who stood on the opposite side of the road, looking down at something on the ground, with clasped hands, a humble image of despair. He was not a hard-hearted man in a general way, and could not witness a child's distress quite unmoved. He crossed the street quickly, and went up to the child. She was a small delicate-looking girl, with an air of shabby gentility, and a pale thoughtful little face; a girl who might have been any age from eight to twelve.

'What is the matter, my child?' Philip asked kindly.

'The medicine, sir; the medicine for mamma,' the girl answered, still looking down at the ground, where Philip now perceived the relics of a broken bottle. 'It is very particular, and very dear. I had to fetch it from the chemist's, and it slipped out of my hand somehow just as I was close to home, and yet I meant to be so careful. O dear, dear, dear, what can I do?'

'Why, leave off crying, to be sure, my little maiden, and get another bottle of medicine. That is the best thing to be done.'

'But the money, sir. I oughtn't to say such things to a stranger, but it was the last there was in the house. There's no more. Mamma will have to go without the medicine, and she's so very, very ill.'

'That she shall not, little one. Come back to the chemist with me, and I'll find plenty of money for him.'

'O, will you really, sir? How good, how very good!'

The girl clasped her hands, and looked up at him with a rapturous face. They were standing just under the solitary lamp of the street. What was it in the little one's face that moved him with a sudden thrill? Something, a look, an air, that brought back another face, seldom absent from him now. And yet there was no special likeness between those two faces. The girl's eyes were blue, her hair a pale auburn. It was in expression alone that she could resemble Catherine Paroldi in the decline of her beauty. But the expression was there—a pleading piteous look that went straight to his heart. And he had no reason to steel his mind against this child. He might indulge the fanciful feeling which that vague something in her looks had awakened in him; he might be kind to this poor waif and stray, without any derogation from the dignity of his hate.

It was rather a long walk to the

high road where the chemist lived, and he had plenty of time to study the little creature who walked so patiently beside him, looking up in his face and answering all his questions with a meek gratitude that touched him profoundly. It was so small a thing that he was doing; a matter of a couple of shillings, perhaps, at most. How friendless the poor must needs be, when such a trifling service seemed so much to them!

The girl was eleven years old, the eldest of the family. There were three other little ones at home, two girls and a boy. Papa's name was Turner. He had been very unfortunate, could not get a situation in the City, and was earning a very little now by writing for some obscure newspaper. He was very clever, the child said, but not so good as mamma. And poor mamma had felt all the trouble so much, and it had made her very ill. It was her heart, the doctor said.

All this the little girl told him with childish frankness, and yet with the womanly tone of a child whom hard experience has made older than her years. They found the chemist's shop still open, had the prescription made up again, and then Philip Rayner, loth to lose sight of the little girl just yet, or to leave her unprotected in the streets, went back with her. She entreated him earnestly not to put himself out of his way on her account. She was quite accustomed to be out as late as that, she said; but he would take no denial, and went home with her, impelled by a strange curiosity to see the place where she lived.

She led him into the parlour, a bare wretched-looking room, though it was clean, and there had evidently been some feeble attempt to make things comfortable. The furniture was of the scantiest and the shabbiest—a rickety-looking Pembroke table, and three or four dilapidated cane chairs. That was all. An unkempt servant-maid, a mere girl of fifteen or so, emerged from the back premises as they went into the little passage, carrying a tallow candle, by the light of which Philip Rayner took his first survey of the parlour. It seemed as if the child divined the meaning of that look.

'It's not our furniture,' she said; 'that was taken away for the rent, more than a month ago. Some kind neighbours lent us these things, and the landlord lets us stay till the house is let; when it is, we must go.'

'What a time you've been, Miss Mary!' exclaimed the servant, looking rather curiously at the unknown visitor. 'Your mar has been frightened about you.'

'I had an accident with the medicine, Sally. I shouldn't have been able to bring any at all, but for this gentleman's kindness.'

The unkempt handmaiden, who was evidently of a soft-hearted nature, threw up her hands and stared at the stranger with goggle-eyed admiration.

'It's not many friends you've got, poor child, goodness knows,' she said. 'It's well there's some can feel for you.'

'And mamma?' asked the little girl eagerly. 'Has she been better while I've been away, Sally?'

'She's been very quiet,' the servant answered dubiously, 'but you know she's always that. Complaints never pass her lips.'

'And have the children slept?'

'Like tops, Miss Mary. I only wish you'd been in bed along of 'em, as you ought to be at your age.'

'Yes,' responded Philip; 'it's late for this poor child to be about, and she seems a fragile little creature.'

'Ah, sir,' replied the servant with a groan, 'if you knew what that child goes through, and how patient she is, and what a head she has, beyond her years! She's kep the hou

together somehow, when things must all have gone to ruin but for her. And as to me—there, I haven't had a halfpenny for wages or beer-money for the last six months, and have hard words besides from master when he's out of sorts. But, lor, I haven't got the heart to leave *her*.'

'No, no, Sally dear, you couldn't leave me,' said the child, clinging to her.

Philip Rayner looked down at them, wondering at them and at this new glimpse of life. The child was such a little lady in the midst of her poverty, had such an air of grace and refinement in her premature womanliness, that he was more interested in her than he could have believed it possible for him to be in a creature so far away from himself. He stood looking down at her, wondering what he could best do to help her, and as shy and awkward as if he had found himself suddenly in the presence of a duchess.

'I shall come back to-morrow evening to inquire how your mamma is, Miss Turner,' he said, 'if you have no objection.'

'O, no, no, indeed; I am so grateful to you.'

Then he shuffled out of the place somehow, contriving as he departed to slip a half-sovereign into the palm of the slipshod handmaiden. He had a notion that anything given to the servant would be for the general benefit, and he could not, for the life of him, have offered money to the child, although she had so freely confessed their poverty.

He thought of her many times next day in the midst of his business, and at dusk drove to the house in a cab, carrying all manner of small luxuries which he fancied might be of use to the invalid; a hamper containing half-a-dozen bottles of the choicest wine in his cellar, a basket of rare hot-house grapes, a package of superfine tea, some tin cases of preserved soup. This sen-

sation of doing something for the good of another v
new feeling to him, and
give a zest to his life.
had felt the utter loneline
lessness of his long blan
more than he had ever c
himself.

He was not content ev
ing these things to the i
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Borough, stopped the cab a
to buy a glittering work
little favourite. It migh
much use to her, but it w
her; he was sure of that

He found the parlour
and clean, a little bit of f
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Mary Turner at work b
of one tall candle, which
look very small. He wa
expected, and she flushed
sure when the maid ann
as 'the strange gentlema

But what was this con
her rapture when she sa
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'O, sir,' she cried w
hands, 'the doctor has s
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and we *could* not give it t
are like an angel come
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And then the fruit,
grapes, with a powdery
them; and then the
mamma was so fond of
the only thing she real
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'I don't want any tha
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He stayed there some
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—they had first to send to a
bour to borrow a corkscrew—
ll a glass with the rich golden
Madeira, and then place a pate
a few grapes on a little tray
it, to carry upstairs to her
er. He waited to hear how
na had taken the wine—it had
great work to make her drink
it was so strong and good—
ow she had admired the grapes;
ow she thanked him for his
ess with all her heart. And
he gave Mary her workbox,
aw her blue eyes opened to
widest as she admired the pre-
mother-of-pearl fittings, and
inty quilted blue silk.
ou couldn't have given me a
present,' she said. 'I have a
deal of work to do, for I make
things for my little brothers
sters.'
might better have said she
d all the things, for there was
more mending than making to
e in that establishment.
hat have I done to deserve
kindness from you? she ex-
d, gazing at her open work-
a rapture of contentment.
ou have encountered misfortune
' he answered.
looked at him wonderingly;
ned such a strange thing to
be praised and rewarded for
what it was so natural for her

ore he left her, he contrived to
ain the address of the landlord,
alled upon him before going
that night. The man was a
publican in the neighbourhood,
ave Mr. Rayner the history of
ants readily enough.
y had occupied his house nearly
ears, and had paid their rent
well for the first twelve months,
ter that had got altogether be-
nd, so that he had been obliged
d in a broker and sell them

it after I'd done it, I hadn't

[illegible]

No, Philip Rayner was [illegible] to confess that there is not much margin for anything in a pound a week, after food and raiment for a family have been provided out of it. What was he to do for these people? It was all very well to indulge his sympathetic feeling for the little girl, but he did not want to do anything quixotic, or to burden himself with the maintenance of an unknown pauper household for the rest of his days. He wanted to be prudent, and yet to help them.

'I don't think you'll lose by your kindness in the long-run,' he said to the landlord. 'I shouldn't like these people to be turned adrift, not while the mother's ill, at any rate; and I should be glad to pay you a quarter's rent in advance, dating from to-night, to secure them three months' shelter, leaving the arrears *in statu quo*.'

'That's kindly, sir,' answered the man, 'and I'm agreeable.'

So Philip Rayner paid him something over a five-pound note, and took a formal receipt for a quarter's rent of 11 Belvidere-street, East Walworth.

As he drove home that night, he remembered the existence of some

spare furniture stowed away in a lumber room at the top of his house: substantial old-fashioned stuff, good old bedding, some faded damask curtains, excellent in its way but superannuated, and put aside some fifty years ago, when the best bedrooms had been refurnished in the unlovely fashion of the Regency. He was up in this lumber room at daybreak, making a selection from these stores, and on his way to the office ordered a carman he sometimes employed to take the things he had chosen to Belvidere-street that afternoon, but, as he valued Mr. Rayner's custom and good-will, the man was to be sure and hold his tongue as to where and whom the things came from.

'I want to help some people in reduced circumstances, and don't want to give them a claim on me in the future,' he said; 'you are man of the world enough to understand that, I'm sure, Potts.'

When Philip Rayner went to Walworth in the evening—and it seemed to him the most natural thing in the world for him to go there—he found the parlour made quite splendid by means of those superannuated chairs and tables which he had found in the lumber room. Mary and the faithful Sally had been busy ever since the goods arrived, arranging and rearranging. There was a long narrow couch by the fireplace, a couch of strictly classic form, and the hardest thing imaginable in couches; but to Mary's fancy, upholsterer never devised anything more elegant or more luxurious. There was a solid table instead of the rickety Pembroke, a comfortable square arm-chair for papa to sit in of a morning when he wrote.

'The curtains are up in mamma's room,' cried Mary; 'they make it so warm and comfortable, and there were such draughts before. Of course the things come from you; I have not even wondered about them. It's like the story of Aladdin, and you are the genius of the lamp.'

He stayed with her for two hours or more that evening, hearing her half-childish, half-womanly talk about this furniture. It was a delight to her to tell him her little old-fashioned arrangements, it was a delight to him to listen. Discovering by chance that the devoted Sally was in the habit of spending her evenings with her young mistress, there being no fire in the kitchen, and that apartment being moreover pervaded by a peculiarly audacious species of black-beetle, which made nothing of human presence, but rioted at its pleasure after nightfall, he insisted that his visits should cause no alteration in this custom. Upon which, with much hesitation, Sally was induced to appear, and took her seat by the farthermost corner of the table, provided with something rather formidable in the way of needlework.

'You see, papa is never at home of an evening,' Mary said, in explanation of this arrangement. 'He is obliged to be at the newspaper office every night.'

And then she went on to tell Philip how grateful her father was for his goodness, and how glad he should be to have any opportunity of thanking him in person, which kind of demonstration Philip Rayner, who was by reason of his lonely habits one of the shyest of men, was religiously determined to escape. If he had not been secure of finding Mary alone of an evening, his visits to Belvidere-street would have speedily ceased.

But Mary was always alone, and he came night after night. He had begun even to wonder what he should do with his evenings when there was no longer any excuse for his coming. Very rarely did he appear empty-handed, and he exhibited a marvellous ingenuity in the judicious selection and variety of his offerings. The younger children had

been presented to him, and he catered for their small wants with an almost childlike delight in childish things. It was so new to him to be interested in any human creature, so new for him to live out of himself. But he never gave Mary money. It seemed to him that to do that would have been to vulgarise their friendship. He slipped a liberal donation into the servant's hand from time to time, and he could see, by the increased comfort and order of all things in the house, that his gifts were employed, as he had fancied they would be, for the general good.

Of course he heard a great deal about Mrs. Turner as his intimacy with Mary increased—how nobly she had borne their poverty, how patiently she had worked, now giving music or singing lessons for the small recompense to be obtained in a poor locality, now toiling incessantly at her needle. She was very clever, the girl said, and papa too, and yet they had found it so hard to live. He heard all about her slow progress from a state of utter prostration towards recovery, and how hopeful the doctor was now—the kind doctor who had a great practice in the Camberwell-road, and yet came to them three times a week without any fee. And so the time went on till Philip had known Mary more than a month, and Mrs. Turner was now strong enough to sit up a little in the early part of every day, and would soon be able to come downstairs.

'And when she does come down you will let her thank you, won't you?' the child pleaded. 'You won't avoid her as you have avoided papa.' It was a hard thing for Philip Rayner to say yes, but the child seemed to have set her heart upon this business, and he could not refuse to please her.

'I don't want any thanks, my dear,' he said; 'what I have done has been done for my own pleasure. But—but if you really wish it, I shall be happy to see your mamma.'

In all this time he had never told Mary his name or abode. If he had been indeed the genius of the lamp, she would have known as much about his worldly circumstances as she knew now—nor had the child ever evinced the faintest curiosity. It seemed her nature to be a lady.

At last the important day came. Mamma was well enough to spend an afternoon downstairs. There was to be a little tea-drinking in honour of the event, and Philip Rayner had consented to come much earlier than usual in order to assist at this ceremonial. He had to leave business before his usual time, and to go without his dinner, in order to do this; but he thought nothing of those small sacrifices. He felt nothing but a sense of shyness in being presented to a stranger whom he had benefited.

He found Mary watching for him at the garden gate, bleak and cold as the weather was, without shawl or bonnet, and with her pale auburn hair blowing in the wintry wind. She clapped her hands joyfully when she saw him.

'Everything is ready,' she said, 'and the parlour looks so nice, mamma won't know it. She'll think the fairies have been really at work. Come and see. She's not down yet, but is to come down in a few minutes.'

Yes, the parlour looked very snug and comfortable. Such a ruddy little fire; such sparkling tea-things, Britannia metal polished till it was brighter than most people's silver; and muffins and marmalade, and unheard-of luxuries of that kind, and an all-pervading odour of tea and toast. The inexorable classic sofa was wheeled close to the fire ready for mamma; papa was not at home—that newspaper absorbed a great deal of his time.

Philip Rayner took his seat where Mary told him, in the post of honour opposite the invalid's sofa. Her radiant joyous face moved him deep-

ly. To think that such small things could give so much happiness, and that he had missed it. That was always the burden of his thoughts at such times. He sat where she placed him, waiting for the convalescent's appearance.

Presently there came the sound of a light feeble step upon the stairs, then the faint rustling of a woman's dress, and then the door was opened softly, and a lady came in. Tall, and slim, and pale, with great dark eyes.

He started to his feet with a loud cry:

'Catherine!'

Yes, it was she; not the bright Catherine of his youth, but the wan faded woman who had flashed past him in the city street—faded, and yet most beautiful to him in the wreck of her loveliness—the woman he had sworn to hate, whose face he had prayed God he never might look upon again.

She echoed his cry faintly, and tottered a few paces forwards as if she would have fallen at his feet; but he caught her in his arms, and held her to his breast, looking down at her with a tender smile.

'Catherine,' he said, 'do you remember the first time I kissed you? Once more, my love, only once more,' and he pressed his lips upon the pale careworn forehead. 'There was selfish passion in that first kiss. Remorse and forgiveness are in this.'

After this there came explanations; and she told her cousin of the evil days that had fallen upon her since her marriage, and how, in the last place where they lived, they had been so deeply in debt and so utterly unable to pay, that they had been fain to leave by stealth, and to enter a new neighbourhood under an assumed name, lest their creditors should follow them. There were no words needed to tell how bitter this had been to the woman's honourable mind, or how the man's character had deteriorated before it came to this. She spoke of him with unvarying love and gentleness, but she did not pretend that he had been blameless.

'I think he might have done better if he had had one friend to help him,' she said plaintively; 'but he had none. We were quite friendless.'

'He shall have a friend in future,' Philip answered promptly; 'he shall come back to my office. He has formed bad habits, perhaps; never mind, Catherine, we will cure him of them. It was I who turned him adrift. I owe him an atonement. His debts shall be paid, and he shall come to me on better terms than when he left the firm; and you, and Mary, and the little ones, must have a pretty cottage farther away, somewhere in the country, where my sweet pale lily will blossom into a rose.'

He laid his hand tenderly upon the child's head. 'My darling,' he said, 'I think my love for you has made me a new man.'

Nor did his love for her change. She was always the delight of his life, and in the days to come, Mary Tolson became a great heiress, the beloved adopted daughter of that man whose favourite boast had been that he was 'a good hater.'

Edmund

H. K. Browne, del.

THE BEGINNING OF LORD B GOOD FORTUNE.

THE MYSTERY OF VISCOUNT BOWLDOUT

A West-end Romance

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

His lordship was furious, and all the attempts to pacify him were the dismalest of failures. 'Never,' he said solemnly to her ladyship, 'never,' and as he spoke he added weight to his injunction by bringing down his finely-formed but somewhat gouty hand on a buhl table covered with gimcracks from Dresden, and causing those tiny magots to shiver in their porcelain shoes,—'never let me hear the name of that abandoned, that hardened prodigal again! I absolutely forbid its being pronounced in this house. He is a disgrace to his family, to his order, and to the profession to which he belonged.' And having delivered himself of this terrible denunciation, his lordship buttoned his coat across his noble breast, leant one hand on his hip, and extended the other in a monitory manner towards his lady, looking in this attitude remarkably like Scipio Africanus, or the late Lord Grey in the act of moving the second reading of the Reform Bill. I think, by the way, it was Lord John who moved it; but that matters little.

Her ladyship wept. How could she refrain from tears, seeing that the hardened prodigal whom she had just heard denounced, repudiated, and banished from the paternal roof —represented for the nonce by a back drawing-room in a private hotel in Jermyn-street—was her own son? *Du reste*, her ladyship was continually weeping. In her interesting youth her nursemaids were wont to address her reproachfully as 'Cry-baby,' and to speak of her contumeliously, when she was out of hearing, as that 'whining little puss.' In the Brigade of Guards (to which her son had, alas! belonged) they used to call her Lady Waterworks.

Her ladyship's spouse was the Right Honourable the Earl of Impycue. His lordship owned estates of immense extent in several counties, several coal-mines in the North, and a slate-quarry in Wales; and Impycue-terrace and Bowldout-street, in the cathedral city of Fustyford, belonged to him; but all his broad acres were mortgaged several times over, and he had no money. His wife had no money: that is to say, her lord and her trustees between them had muddled it away, somehow. Carlos de Veu Dunnop, by courtesy Viscount Bowldout, his lordship's only son, and heir to the earldom, had no money. In the entire family there was not any cash.

Bowldout, the abandoned and hardened prodigal, had expectations, but they all came to nothing. His uncle, Major-general Dunnop, formerly of the H.E.I.C.'s army, ought to have left him several lacs, or crores, of rupees—at all events, a prodigious quantity of money. He did not do anything of the kind, bequeathing his large fortune, his indigo plantations, and his opium farms to a lady of dark complexion and of the Mahometan persuasion, with a numerous young family, all as fat as butter, and of the colour of Epps's cocoa. Then old Sir Thomas Roper, one of the judges of the Court of Common Pleas, and his mother's brother, had been confidently expected to make young Viscount Bowldout his heir.

He was a bachelor, and had saved many thousands at the bar before he was made a judge. Sir Thomas died from the effects of indigestion after dining with the Worshipful Company of Ratcatchers at their Hall in Cat-eaton-street, and he left all his money to the Asylum for Idiots. The Honourable Miss Dunnop indeed, that wealthy spinster of Grosvenor-square, his aunt, left him a thumping legacy —enough to have rehabilitated the fortunes of the entire family—but the old lady having been, unfortunately, in her latter years somewhat eccentric—keeping squirrels in her bedroom; always dining in a cocked-hat, with nine wax candles on the table; frequently calling in Italian hurdygurdy grinders, Ethiopian serenaders, and the like, to discourse sweet music to her, and regaling them with potted meats and sherry wine—distant relatives, to whom she didn't leave anything in her will, started the hypothesis that the Hon. Miss Dunnop was mad. So the estate was thrown into Chancery, and must have hurt itself in the fall, since it lay in Lincoln's-inn for many years without moving, and apparently unconscious. At all events, nobody got any money, the lawyers excepted: the costs always being costs in the cause.

So there was 'nae luck at a'' about the noble house of Dunnop. Chronic poverty did not, however, prevent the Earl of Impycue from living on the fat of the land, from sitting at quarter sessions and sending poachers to gaol for having pheasants' eggs in the crowns of their hats, and imprisoning little children for plucking turnips or sprigs of lavender. Poverty did not hinder him from giving balls and dinner-parties; it did not prevent her ladyship from appearing at court, covered with diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, and with a satin train several feet in length behind her. There are some people who *must* have a carriage and two horses to it. Lady Impycue always had. If you ask me who paid for it, or for the clothes she wore, or the food she ate, I must reply that I really don't know. In *Vanity Fair* we get occasional glimpses of how the Rawdon Crawleys contrived to get on,—not precisely so as to make both ends meet, but at all events to lace the corset of genteel existence with sufficient closeness to hide the beggar's smock beneath; but their 'nothing a year' was, after all, more a *façon de parler* than an absolute reality. Rawdon won money at cards somehow, and Becky borrowed freely from the Marquis of Steyne. Now, the Earl of Impycue had never been accused of a tendency to play; it was his grandfather, the first earl, who had originally 'dipped' the estate by gambling; and it was very certain that nobody would lend the Countess of Impycue any money. Yet they rubbed along somehow, had the best of everything, and a box at the Opera, and always dined at eight. I think they must have lived on air —or on the wind of their nobility, so to speak.

Carlos de Veu Dunnop, Lord Viscount Bowldout, was deeply in debt when he went to Eton, at the mature age of ten years; at least, the cake-woman, and the lady who sold sweetstuff, and the hunch-backed old man who dealt in tops, marbles, balls, and hockey-sticks, in the neighbourhood of the residence of the Reverend Lancelot Graves, Montpelier-road, Twickenham, who had the honour to prepare his lordship for the great public seminary just named, all declared that the heir to the earldom of Impycue owed them 'no end of money.' It may be said, likewise, that he was remotely in debt to the Rev. Lancelot himself; for that respectable private tutor's bill for board and education remained in an unsettled condition when the youthful viscount was transferred to the 'distant spires and antique

s' which are visible from the Playing-fields. Who paid the ıundred guineas per annum or less requisite for keeping a t Eton must be accounted one : mysteries of the noble family celebrating, since very little , I understand, is given by the ; and dames at the college ; 'grateful service still adores [enry's holy shade.' Stay, the Miss Dunnop was still alive, ad not yet become so eccentric partake of her meals in a d-hat, when young Carlos went on. Perhaps *she* paid her ne- s school-bills.

; little bills she assuredly did ıy for him; and from the bar- at the 'Christopher,' who had d his lordship for beer, cold ıd-water, Abernethy biscuits, ›ies, and cigars—probably con- l on Sundays, and in church- —to his purveyor of cricket-bats ıckets, his supplier of tarts and r-beer, and the ingenious me- : who mended the watch—who for it?—whose works he was s breaking, the memory of Car- Veu Dunnop, Viscount Bowld- ngered for many sad years in ›nd hearts of the tradespeople ton, Slough, and Windsor. would never forget him, they pathetically. Some of these ; folk went even farther in affectionate familiarity. They of their absent debtor as a scamp.'

; needless to follow the brilliant of my noble hero at the Uni- r of Oxford. He left without ; a degree; but though he no figure in the schools, he was ; immersed in books. There carcely a ledger in a trades- shop in the High-street with- 'hole pages being devoted to ıs of the academical indebted- f Viscount Bowldout.

ıer this he went into the Guards. ; heard that he had nine tail- ors; that he 'tubbed' every morning with three bottles of eau-de-cologne to his bath; that he had fourteen horses in his stable—or somebody else's stable, which amounted to the same thing; and that he thought nothing of giving—or rather owing, the terms are convertible — half-a-guinea for a lily-of-the-valley to wear in the button-hole of his coat. He betted heavily, and stood to win thirty thousand, they say, on Dicky Sam, the Derby favourite, that went dead lame on the morning of the race; and he was associated in some mysterious manner with the Royal Depravity Theatre at the period when that favourite place of entertainment was under the management of Miss Maggie Beaumanois (*née* Scruff), formerly of the corps de ballet. Maggie lived at the Boltons, S.W., in very grand style. You remember her piebald ponies, her Dutch pug, and her diminutive tiger in buckskins and top-boots,—those articles were all gifts from her attached friend Viscount Bowldout of the Grenadier Guards.

I think it was for fourteen thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven pounds fifteen shillings and fourpence threefarthings that the young gentleman was bankrupt, in the spring of 18—. Half the *Commercial Directory*, in the shape of tailors, shirtmakers, bootmakers, hosiers, jewellers, livery-stable and hotel keepers, wine-merchants, and fancy stationers, seemed to be present in Basinghall-street to present their proof of debts. Strangely enough, there were no bill-discounters in the list of creditors, and on this circumstance the learned Commissioner warmly complimented the noble bankrupt when he allowed him to pass his examination; the truth being that no discounter in London would have 'done' any of his lordship's 'paper,' even at six times sixty per cent interest. 'He never had a rap, and he never will have

rap, unless he gets that Chancery soot, and he won't get it,' quoth Mr. Lee Vigh Sharp, of Knaves'-inn, to Mr. Solomon Flatcatcher, of Little Sabretasche-street, when the prospects of the youthful bankrupt were discussed.

This, then, was the 'hardened and abandoned prodigal' whom his noble papa felt compelled to repudiate and renounce—I will not say to disinherit, since his lordship had nothing to leave his heir save his title and his debts. But why, it may be asked, was the Earl of Impycue in such a terrible rage with his son? Was running into debt unknown in the family? Was not, indeed, the young man rather to be congratulated than censured, on having positively got into debt to the tune of nearly fifteen thousand pounds without a shilling wherewith to discharge his liabilities? I am somewhat of opinion, that Viscount Bowldout's bankruptcy had very little to do with the Earl of Impycue's indignation against him, and that the real reason for the paternal wrath was this: that the improvident and ungrateful young man had had the inconceivable folly to fall over head and ears in love with Fanny Clearthorn, a pretty but penniless governess in the family of Sir John Cramshovel (Cramshovel, Scalesby, and Wayte, Lombard-street), the famous baronet and banker, when he might have had in marriage and for the asking Clementina Angelina Argentina Cramshovel, the baronet-banker's only child and heiress. It is true that she was much marked with the small-pox and had only one eye, but then how *very* rich she was to be! Now do you understand why my lord was furious, why my lady wept? and now can you comprehend how Fanny Clearthorn was expelled from Sir John's big house in Eaton-square; how Lady Cramshovel denounced the banished governess as a designing minx; while Clementina Angelina Argentina said meekly that she forgave the crawling serpent from the bottom of her heart—when a woman says that she forgives you from the bottom of her heart, you had better make your will; it is all over with you—and how Lord Viscount Bowldout arrived at the conclusion that he had rather made a mess of matters generally, and that he was in 'a doosid fix.' It was the opinion of his lordship's former comrades in the Guards, and from which gallant corps he had long since sold out, that Bowley had 'gone a mucker,' and 'come a cropper.' They were 'horsey' young men, and spoke habitually in the stable *argot*, so dear to the British youth.

* * * * *

One afternoon, at the height of the London season, Viscount Bowldout was walking somewhat gloomily through Curzon-street Mayfair, into which thoroughfare he had entered by the narrow passage which leads from Hay-hill by the garden wall of Lansdowne House, on his way to Hyde-park. It accorded with his lordship's purpose to avoid the more populous thoroughfare of Piccadilly, in which numbers of his lordship's tradesmen—those he had patronised *since* his bankruptcy, and who were wont upon occasion to be indecorously importunate (this is a sadly democratic age)—had their places of business. Being utterly ruined, Lord Bowldout had naturally residential chambers in Pall-mall and a stall at the Opera, and carefully kept his name on the books of all his clubs. The Committee of the Junior Lavender Kid Glove behaved most handsomely during the trying period of his lordship's bankruptcy. His lordship's want of gaiety on the afternoon in question was not due, I should say, to the general embarrassment of his affairs. He had been born in a muddle, and he very probably thought himself predestined to die in one. He was melancholy be-

he wanted a flower for his but-
ıole, and he happened to have
un his credit—or rather, the
t of his credit; the ghost of his
as he pathetically called it—
every one of his florists, and to
thout half-a-crown in his pocket
ewith to purchase the wonted
decoration.

Iafternoon, my lud; 'ope your
ip's well,' the Viscount heard a
very familiar to him exclaim
by him. He raised his eyes—
d been gazing at the pavement,
ough in hopes of seeing lilies-of-
alley sprout from the interstices
ıe flags—and saw standing at
oor of a greengrocer's, florist's,
'ruiterer's shop a face and form
familiar to him. They belonged
hn Rooter, formerly butler to
oble father. 'There's tick for
rer, then, at all events,' thought
ount Bowldout, as he conde-
lingly returned the ex-butler's
e, and at his respectful invita-
entered his small but cleverly-
ed establishment.

ıat little matter of the flower
ıe button-hole was soon settled.
on't think I need book it, my
quoth Mr. Rooter with jocular
ence. 'It ain't the first bokay
lordship's family's had from
Lord! how her ladyship used
ick it up for flowering-plants at
t 'omes.'

've nothing to do with my fam-
debts,' interposed his lordship
y. 'They've all cut me—cut
lead, Rooty, because I've gone
ıash.' He was a simple-minded
g nobleman, and was not averse
ing the naive *patois* popular at
c-halls and on the knife-boards
ınibuses.

Know hall about it, my lud. No
nce,' went on the retired cellarer.
ır ludship must be getting haw-
ırd hup.'

Hard up isn't the word,' said
ount Bowldout wearily. 'I'm
ered. I can't go to my clubs, be-
cause I owe the waiters money. It's a
real smash. I shall have to sweep a
crossing, or go on the stage and play
the hind legs of the hippy-pippy-what-
d'ye-call-'m in the pantomime.'

''Ope not, my lud. When things
come to the worst they must mend,
so my old woman says. Maybe, my
lud, I could give you a lift that
would be of some service to you.'

'You, Rooty?'

'Well, look here, my lud. I'm a
hold suvvent of the family. It's true
that your pa never paid me my wages,
and borrowed money besides, and
that your ma went tick with me for
flowerin'-plants till flesh and blood
couldn't stand it no longer; but the
'ouse of Dunnop's brought me into
sussiety, and sussiety is what I want.
My lud, I ham a hambitious man.'

'Indeed, Rooty!'

'Hi always were, from a knifeboy
uppards. This shop is hall very
well, and my old woman turns in a
good bit o' money. Hi've done pretty
comfortable too by attendin' dinner-
parties; and the pastrycook's shop
hopposite, which we send hout din-
ners, is mine.'

'By Jove, you're a regular finan-
cier, Rooty. You'll be a Rothschild
some of these days,' broke in Lord
Bowldout, quite interested.

'Hi wouldn't bemean myself to be
hanything so low,' resumed the vino-
floral pastrycook. 'The wine-mer-
chant's cellarage hunder 'Odges the
tailor's, in Jermyn-street, is mine.
But my views is 'igher; 'igher, my
lud. They haspires to hupholstery.'

'To *what?*'

'To hupholstery,' solemnly went
on the ambitious Rooty. 'Likewise,
with a view to hauctioneering, which,
bein' neglected in my hown heddi-
cation, I am 'avin' my son James
given classical tooition in one of the
best commercial hacademies at 'Ox-
ton. Han hupholsterer, a fash'nable
hupholsterer and hauctioneer in St.
James's-street, I 'ave made up my
mind to be.'

'And why not an undertaker too, eh, Rooty?'

'Why not, hindeed! You may chaff, my lud; but let me tell you that hundertaking comes natteral hafter hupholstery and hauctioneering; and let me tell you, that when you get into the line of berryin' dooks and herls, there's a deal of meat on the transaction.'

'I don't think you'll get much out of *my* governor's funeral,' the candid Viscount remarked. 'Besides, we've had tick at Banting's for the last three-quarters of a century.'

'Hit hain't o' berryin' you hi'm thinkin', my lud,' replied the greengrocer amicably. 'Hi want to put you in the way of makin' a livin'. *Do* you want to make one?'

'Yes; if I'm not obliged to work for it,' he answered with perfect simplicity.

'I'll go bail that you sha'n't 'ave to work 'arder than ever you did in your life. You don't call goin' hout to dinner 'ard work?'

'No, not very.'

'Good! Now, will your ludship go hout to dinner at height o'clock to-morrow evening at the 'ouse of' —here he consulted a large account-book—'Singleton Fytch Fytch, Esquire, Boanerges-gate, 'Yde-park?'

'But I'm not asked, and I don't know the man from Adam.'

'Never mind that. You'll be asked by the first post to-morrow mornin'. Will you go? You know a hold suvvent wouldn't deceive you. Hand look 'ere, my lud. Hif you want a cool 'underd, jest to set you straight a little, jest put your 'and to a Hi Howe Hew, and the money's yours as soon as I can get it out of the cash-box in the back parlour.'

* * * * *

Mr. Rooty, of Curzon-street, Mayfair, greengrocer, fruiterer, and florist, interested in the pastrycook's shop over the way, and in the wine-merchant's premises under Mr. Hodge's, the tailor, in Jermyn-street, was not exactly the mocking fiend Mephistopheles; nor had Viscount Bowldout much of the stuff of Dr. Heinrich Faust in his composition. Still there was a compact entered into between the Viscount and the ambitious greengrocer, that summer afternoon. The next morning Lord Bowldout received at his chambers a card of large dimensions and highly glazed, in which Mr. and Mrs. Singleton Fytch Fytch, of Boanerges-gate, Hyde-park, solicited the honour of Viscount Bowldout's company at dinner that evening at eight o'clock, R.S.V.P. And Viscount Bowldout went to the dinner, and enjoyed himself tolerably well at a sumptuous banquet with a host and hostess and a number of guests, none of whom he had ever met before in his life.

The Viscount almost entirely absented himself from his accustomed haunts during the remainder of the season. The gallant dandies, his ex-chums, opined that 'Bowley' was 'up a tree' and 'keeping dark.' Some said that he had gone to Australia; others that he was at Hombourg, backing zero. Sir Benjamin Backbite declared that Bowldout had married a wealthy old female at Cheltenham, and was doomed to constant attention on her cats; and Joseph Surface, Esq., was truly sorry to think so, but feared—he *strongly and sadly feared*—that the misguided young man had cut his throat, and that the awful tragedy had been hushed up. It was at Calais, Joseph Surface, Esq., had been told. But though Lord Bowldout was seen no more in the club smoking-room, or at the bow-windows thereof, he had by no means bid adieu to London life. He dined out most assiduously. Lepoul, his valet (from whom, indeed, I obtained the materials for this veracious history), showed me a whole pile of dinner invitations, all of which had been duly accepted and honoured between the months of May and August 18—. For exam-

re were Mr. and Mrs. Jar-
addington, Peckhambury-
Mr. and Mrs. Treblepippin,
la Lodge, Lombard-gardens
the Misses Hyde, Leatherum-
, Tanner's-park; Mr. and
Figg, Sandilands Cottage,
nt; Mr. and Mrs. Warm-
the Snippery, Acton; and
nore. Besides the dinners,
scount found time to attend
the season no less than a
l and seventeen 'at homes,'
blies,' and 'thés dansantes.' I
eard, too, that he was on
an one occasion seen at the
n Hotel, Folkestone, and at
and Hotel, Scarborough, in
pany of ladies and gentlemen
isly attired, but personally un-
to the aristocratic acquaint-
rho, by chance, came across
Towards the close of the
Lord Tom Tupper (the Mar-
Parnassus's fourth son) be-
chance in the City, happened
Bowldout alighting from a
in Lombard-street. The
it seemed anxious to avoid
and hurried up one of the
of the auriferous thorough-
'Now what the doose was
doing in Lombard-street?'
om Tupper continually asked
the next fortnight of all the
who would listen to him. 'It
ssible, you know, that he's got
ng account there, except on
ng side of the slate.' Tom
, there are more things in
and earth than were dreamt
ur philosophy.

it this time, if you scanned
ing papers, and especially the
r, carefully, you might light
count Bowldout's name very
tly as a director of the Je-
ane Opal Mining Company
d), the Universal Discount
tion of the New Atlantic,
edit Foncier of Utopia, the
n-your-Throat Insurance Cor-
n, and kindred joint-stock
enterprises. Lord Viscount Bowldout was President of the Cosmopolitan Washing, Ironing, Clear-starching, and Shirt-button Guarantee Society, and Deputy-chairman of the Intersolar Grand Trunk Railway. Meanwhile his lordship, although he began to look somewhat pale and careworn, was, in a worldly sense, flourishing exceedingly. He drove a mail phaeton with two splendidly-matched bays, and he could have driven four-in-hand had he liked, and have paid for his team too. He had an account at a banking-house in Lombard-street (O shallow Tom Tupper!), and that account was on the right side of the slate, and a very round one.

Fortune favours the fortunate; and there is nothing that succeeds like success. These may be platitudes; but they are true. Just as Lord Bowldout was beginning to think that he had money enough to marry little Fanny Clearthorn (to whom he had never, to his honour, been false), the Lord High Chancellor woke up one morning in a perfectly weasel-like state of wakefulness, and delivered a decree which somehow had the effect of moving the Court of Probate, and the Court of Common Pleas, and all manner of subsidiary tribunals, and of arousing the very wildest excitement in Lincoln's-inn and in the Inner and Middle Temple. No less than three leading articles were written in popular daily papers on the Chancellor's judgment; the effect of which was that the embargo so long laid upon the estate of the Honourable Lucretia Honoria Dunnop, spinster, deceased, was all at once removed, and that a large property — mulcted, however, in a trifle like ten thousand pounds for costs—came into the sole and undivided possession of the Hon. Carlos de Vue Dunnop, commonly called Viscount Bowldout. He was reconciled to his noble parents that very evening (how her ladyship wept!);

and three weeks afterwards Fanny Clearthorn—the rector of St. George's, Hanover-square, aiding and abetting—became Lady Bowldout. Miss Clementina Angelina Argentina Cramshovel remains unmarried. She is the Lady Superior of the Sisterhood of St. Verges, Old Brompton. The good Sisters devote themselves to educational work; and the Lady Superior, it is said, does not disapprove of corporal chastisement in the training of the young.

But the 'Mystery of Viscount Bowldout'? Well, there is no longer a Lord Bowldout, or rather, the courtesy-title is now held by a chubby little boy with large blue eyes and curly flaxen hair, whom you may see sometimes trotting on his Shetland pony in Rotten-row, his bridle held by the stout coachman, mounted on a cob as stout, at his side. The Earl of Impycue has gone to the land where debtors are at rest, and Carlos his son—not a 'hardened prodigal'—reigns in his stead. I think I can best explain the 'Mystery' as related to me in his lordship's own words, overheard one morning at breakfast by Lepoul, his man, who, besides, had known all about his master's occult proceedings for a very long time.

'You see, my pet,' said his lordship, trifling with a partridge's wing on his plate, 'when I left the Guards, and the poor old governor turned me up, and that bankruptcy business—I've paid all the fellows since then, with five per cent interest—was bothering me, I was awfully hard up, and didn't know literally which way to turn. I was thinking of enlisting in the Carabineers, or something desperate of that sort. Well, you know Rooty, the rich auctioneer, upholsterer, and undertaker, in St. James's-street? He furnished this house, you remember. He's disgustingly rich. They say he's going into Parliament. Well, when I was at the lowest flow-water, he kept a little greengrocer's shop in Mayfair. He had been butler in our family, you know. Well, he was a good-natured fellow, and lent me some money, and then— Well, when a fellow's hard up he's obliged to do very shady things. *I used to go out to dinner for him.*'

'Go out to dinner for him! What on earth do you mean, Charles?' asked Lady Impycue, kissing her husband's forehead.

'Just what I say,' returned his lordship, swiftly avenging by the *lex talionis* the aggravated assault just recorded. 'You see, Rooty was a pushing fellow, and had gone into the pastrycook line, and used to send out dinners. He had no end of customers who had made heaps of money, but had been tradespeople, or something of that sort, and didn't know anybody in what is called "Society" that they could ask to dine with them, or to come to their parties afterwards. They had lots of girls, but no men. Well, by Jove, if that Rooty didn't serve his customers with guests as well as with dinners. I know he served them with *me*, and I suppose he put me in the bill. You see I hadn't a penny, but then I was a Lord, and that was something. By degrees, by going to and fro among them, I met a lot of rich City fellows, and then I got made director of a lot of companies; and they used to give me two guineas every time I went down to lunch in the board-room; and besides, I got a lot of paid-up shares, and they used to tell me how to sell them at the right time; and altogether I did very well, till the Chancery suit turned up trumps; and that's all about it, my darling.' *Même jeu* in the aggravated assault department, as before.

Such was the Mystery of Viscount Bowldout. Tom Tupper, you have not much money. *Abi tu, et fac similiter.*

SPLODGE'S 'BEN'

BY MARIAN NORTHCOTT, AUTHOR OF 'TIM TWINKLETON'S TWINS,' ETC.

A NIGHT to be remembered in the neighbourhood of the Theatre Royal Bye-street: an occasion when all the metropolitan artistes of celebrity (*vide* announcements) were to cross the water and take part in the performances. In short, the night of Splodge's benefit.

This was how it came about. An enterprising builder, having some leisure time, and a posse of workmen whom it was desirable to keep employed, thought he might as well make use of a small piece of waste ground he had lately purchased, by constructing thereon a theatre. The *locale* was in the suburbs, and scarcely adapted for the success of any dramatic speculation; but the builder knew that, however unpromising the district, somebody would very quickly be found willing to take the establishment on lease, and, after spending a fortune, retire heartsick, to make room for another aspirant to theatrical management. The builder was wise in his generation. He got some business-people to 'work' the thing, and was fortunate enough to obtain for his inaugural performance a drama which drew crowded audiences for over a hundred nights. Ere the commencement of another season, there were half-a-dozen applications for the house. The one accepted was that of George Mountjoy, Esquire, an amateur actor, who, on the strength of obtaining the encomiums of certain injudicious friends, thought himself the best Romeo, Claude, Charles Surface, and Orlando, of the day. The Bye-street Theatre being situated near the residences of the said injudicious friends, Mr. Mountjoy felt he ought to seize the opportunity afforded of bringing his remarkable talents more conspicuously before the public. The usual results followed: empty benches and ridicule; finally, no treasury. No need to suspend the free-list there: 'paper' without end was in circulation. From tragedy and high-class comedy, the theatre descended to melodrama and burlesque. Still the same ill-fortune. A blight seemed to have fallen upon the place; the decorations were becoming tarnished, the draperies were fading, and about the pit there was an odour of mouldiness most depressing.

Among those connected with this management was William Splodge, a hard-working, willing old creature, who, during his forty years spent upon the stage, had been everything, from manager downwards. There was no more useful fellow in the profession, and no man better known in the district bounded by Long-acre on the north, Russell-street on the south, Drury-lane on the east, and Covent-garden on the west. He could satisfactorily fill any position before or behind the curtain, and was at home in either tragedy or farce. A good many of Splodge's associates blamed him for accepting an engagement at such an out-of-the-way establishment; but at the time he was doing nothing, and having previously 'coached' Mountjoy in some of his impersonations, and been well remunerated, he felt he could hardly refuse to assist in the new enterprise. Splodge saw the direction the theatre was taking, but he was too much of a man to

desert the sinking ship. Mountjoy, prior to the cares of management, had been a good friend to him and his only daughter, and it was his duty, he considered, to remain as long as he could be of any service.

It was in the terms of his engagement that Splodge was to have a 'ticket-night;' and the 'general utility,' selecting a Monday in February, busied himself about the arrangements with such success, that when he put forth his bill the whole neighbourhood was in amazement. *Othello*, with an eminent tragedian from the West-end as the Moor, and the irrepressible Mountjoy as Iago, his first appearance in that character; incidentals, in which a variety of popular vocalists were announced to take part, including the latest star, O'Duffer, who was to give his 'inimitable sketches of Irish life and manners;' and last but not least, 'Morton's celebrated comedy, the *School of Reform*,' in which Mr. Diogenes Brown was to sustain the part of Tyke, and Splodge himself was to appear as the old man who recognises in the returned horse-stealer his son. A splendid programme certainly, but what attracted most attention was its final portion. Diogenes Brown was a colonial performer, who in eccentric comedy had lately taken the town by storm. He had as yet never appeared at any other theatre in Great Britain but that in which he made his *début*, and his promising to appear at Splodge's 'ben' was therefore an event to be made much of. Tickets only were profitable to the *bénéficiaire;* and so large a number had been disposed of, that Splodge's heart was as merry as if the whole season had been characterised by success, and full salaries had accompanied it to a close.

'It ain't so much the money I'm thinking of,' he said to his daughter, as, from the window of his humble lodging, he looked anxiously at some dark clouds gathered above. 'If the tickets ain't used, I shall get the price of 'em; and it's very gratifying, dear, on such an occasion as this, to see how one's friends rally round; but I shouldn't like heavy rain to prevent their coming. I wish you could be there, Em.'

He turned from the window, and came to his daughter's side. Although she sat quite close to the cheery fire, and wore a thick woollen jacket over her shoulders and chest, a cold tremor seemed occasionally to thrill through her. She did not rise as her father approached, for she was a cripple.

A bright happy face had Emma Splodge, despite the dark lines beneath her strangely-brilliant black eyes. Her beauty was of a kind that seems not to belong to this world; it was too ethereal. The disease from which she was suffering, instead of depriving her of her good looks, day by day added lustre to her eye, and bloom to her cheek. An expression of patient resignation and of calm content was the principal characteristic of a countenance that simultaneously aroused admiration and pity. She was a pure-hearted, self-sacrificing creature, and had presided over her father's home long ere her mother died. Her lameness was of comparatively recent date: three years ago she belonged to the ballet of a West-end theatre; but one fatal night a blundering stage-carpenter failed to properly close a trap, and Emma Splodge returned home with a broken leg. From that time she had been a cripple, and the sufferings she then endured developed the seeds of the malady which had made her father wifeless. By the doctor's orders, she did not now leave the house after dark; but she never repined or grew moody, for every night, when the performance was over, Splodge came straight to her side, and rehearsed all its main features.

npathising friend had given
anary, which had grown to
e hand that daily fed it, and
d and flapped its little wings
the bars of its cage with
emence when she drew near,
crippled girl did not feel
uite so lonely as before. The
ld not be said to make the
t approach towards singing,
chirruped, and was probably
st-off purchased of a fancier
re trifle; but poor Em loved
ch as though it had been the
ngster in Europe. When-
weak imprisoned thing twit-
he thought it was calling
would go to its cage a score
a day to see that it did not
seed or water.

lso loved flowers, and devoted
noments each morning to
some sooty sprigs of gera-
straggling bush of 'boy's-
ouple of stunted fuchsias, and
ot of mignonette. Besides
and the sickly plants, there
e two rooms rented by her
o be kept clean and neat;
, Em contributed her mite
the expenses of the estab-
, by making dresses and
ticles of attire. The theatre
l her with plenty of work;
Splodge brought home his
r's earnings with his own,
red them into her lap, the
earted creatures experienced
tful sense of independence
ndreamt of and comes not
who eat the bread obtained
means than honest labour.

ge's marriage had been pro-
of another child—a boy, born
ars before Emma. He had
father's hope; but as years
, the old man saw his fond
tions doomed to disappoint-
Dick was a spendthrift, dis-
in character, and heedless of
ety felt by his loving relatives
. As a last resource the lad
iced to emigrate; but on the
voyage out, the ship was wrecked, and barely a score of the two hundred souls embarked at Liverpool reached their destination. His name was not in the list of rescued; and six years had gone by, during which no trace of him had been discovered. Splodge had long since regarded him as dead; but in her ruminative hours, when her father was at the theatre, Em allowed strange hopes to fill her brain.

She liked to fancy that Dick had assumed another name, and was by steady perseverance and industry endeavouring to retrieve the past. To herself she would say, 'It may not be in my time, but perhaps when I am gone he will come back laden with honour and riches; then poor papa will have some one to take care of him.' She dreaded lest her father should be left alone a broken-hearted man, and hugged the hope that Dick might return. She realised the frail tenure upon which her life was held, and thoughts of a future state were ever present in her mind. In the event of her dying suddenly, she wondered what Splodge would do; he would miss her sadly, she was sure of that, but the reappearance of Dick might console him, and together they would be able to visit her grave, and scatter thereon the bright spring flowers she so dearly loved. It did not distress or embarrass her to thus speculate; she was only anxious for her father's peace. 'I wish I could die without grieving him,' she would say; 'and yet it gives me happiness to know that when I am gone, he will think often and tenderly of poor Em.'

'Yes, father,' she said, in reply to Splodge's observation that he wished she were enabled to see the performance; 'I should like to be in the theatre to-night; but you can't tell why.'

A bright twinkle appeared in Splodge's eye; he had an idea what his daughter meant, but he wouldn't

anticipate her for the world; so he answered,

'Well, it can't be Othello; and if it ain't O'Duffer in his Irish entertainment, it must be Diogenes Brown.'

'No; guess again.'

'I can't, Em; it's beyond me.'

'Is that the truth, papa?'

'Yes, my dear, the truth.' Another fib, told in order that he might not balk the innocent pleasure of the being who was inestimably dearer to him than aught else.

'Why, you goose of a silly old father!' laughed the girl, tugging at Splodge's sleeve until he bent his head so that she could place her arms round it, 'don't you play the old man who turns out to be Tyke's father, in the last piece? I should like to go; but you'll tell me all about it when you come back, won't you? Though I'm not there, I shall think of you all the time; and when it's half-past ten I shall say to myself, "Now the great scene is just over. Deafening applause, a call before the curtain: 'Bravo, bravo, Splodge!' and then Diogenes Brown drags in papa, who has a smile upon his face, but seems more than half inclined to cry." That'll be it, I know it will. See now, dear old papa, if my words don't come true.'

Splodge felt a curious choking sensation in his throat, and was obliged to turn away his head, on the pretence of coughing, in order to wipe away the tears that had gathered in his eyes. With such hopeful anticipations did Em beguile the time, that the ancient Dutch clock in the corner struck six ere they had finished tea. Then Splodge jumped from his chair with his mouth full of bread-and-butter, and hurried to the other side of the room for his greatcoat. His daughter, with the assistance of her crutch, limped after him; to assist her father in putting on his outer garment was one of the many little privileges and incidents of her daily life which served to divert her mind. Splodge would no more have dared try to dispense with her aid in the matter of the greatcoat than he would have endeavoured to play Polonius without making that garrulous old man a semi-buffoon. Em very considerably petted her papa; with the exception of the attenuated wheezy canary, he was the only living creature upon whom she could pour her wealth of womanly love.

When Splodge was accoutred to resist the sturdy east breeze, and had wound around his neck a thick comforter, his daughter kissed him, and bade him hurry along as rapidly as he could. Once more alone, Em began to stitch assiduously at a dress she was making for a neighbour, occasionally pausing to glance into the contents of a huge saucepan she had placed upon the fire, and which by and by sent forth such an agreeable odour, that it not only permeated the apartment, but the whole of the house.

During the early part of the evening the performance at the theatre progressed most satisfactorily. There was a capital house; nearly all tickets too. Gallery full, pit ditto, and dress circle very respectably attended. Furthermore, wonderful to relate, one of the private boxes—the Bye-street Theatre boasted four—was occupied. A tall sunburnt young man had walked up to the box-office just as the performance commenced, and had purchased a private-box ticket, and was occupying it alone. No little curiosity was excited behind the curtain, by the fact that the box book-keeper had said that the mysterious gentleman appeared more like a fellow 'pro' than anything else.

Of course the stranger was very much observed, and indeed 'played to' by some of the company; but when the great West-end actor declared, that having appeared in nearly every theatre in the United Kingdom, and having a remarkable recollection

he yet failed to recognise
ct of general attention, the
vas settled. *Othello* was at
the West-end tragedian had
himself hoarse; and that
creature Mountjoy was con-
ing himself upon having
another triumph as Iago;
dentals were rapidly gone
; the great O'Duffer, with
neations of Irish life and
r, had twirled his shillelah
is wrists ached, and had
himself into an encore; and
curtain was down prepara-
the commencement of the
f Reform. Great and grow-
tement before the curtain,
k and anxious faces behind.
sicians have performed the
selection set down for them,
iving no sign from the wing
ıe on with a set of waltzes.
signs of impatience manifest
ves in the cheaper parts of
se, whilst the more select
the dress circle consult
and peevishly complain of
thy 'wait,' and then come
Splodge!' 'Splodge!' 'Why
u go on?' and divers ear-
whistles from the gallery
et another short space; the
seeming as hours to the im-
ıudience, and then a move-
the curtain.

chestra pause, and the shouts
ıder, as that eternal Mount-
ously emerges from the wing.
ons with his hand for silence,
r a while his voice is heard.
ly regrets to say that the
iogenes Brown has not yet
but a swift messenger had
patched to his lodgings, and
tely on his return the result
e communicated to the audi-
leantime, he begged to crave
ntion of the audience to a
peratic selection from Flo-
era of *Martha.* For a time
se is quieted, and amid the
ent and speculation aroused
by the managerial statement, the solitary man in the private box retires unobserved. Just when 'M' appari tutt' amore' is being given as a flute solo, the green baize is again drawn aside, and Mountjoy reappears — this time his face radiant with smiles. The audience think it is all right, and cheer accordingly. The announcement, therefore, that the managerial messenger has returned with the news that Diogenes Brown had two hours previously sprained his ankle, and was totally unable to appear again that night—being in fact now at his hotel in bed—is received with shouts of derision and hisses. But the manager does not retreat: he has something more to say, and it is this something which has brought back the smiles to his before pallid cheeks. Though Brown is unfortunately prevented from appearing, no change in the programme will be necessary, inasmuch as a gentleman from among the audience—Mountjoy here gazes significantly at the vacant private box—has volunteered to play Tyke. No sooner have the words been uttered than a revulsion of feeling occurs: those who hissed before are now most vehement in their applause, and amid the hubbub the curtain rises. Until the volunteer who has so gallantly come to the rescue makes his entry, the audience do not resume their seats; they prepare to give him an encouraging welcome; but, to their astonishment, they recognise in the mysterious stranger, an accomplished actor and no raw débutant: he is not only word-perfect, but easy and natural in his action. From that time the actor held the house within his grasp, and his influence did not for a moment diminish.

But what of poor Splodge, who, attired as Tyke's father, had listened to the noisy impatience of the audience with the most poignant anguish? He knew scores of friends who had purchased tickets solely with the

view of witnessing the rarely-acted *School of Reform*, and he would rather have given them the price of admission doubled (little as he could afford it) than they should have been disappointed. Stationed at the wing, he heard every whistle, and fancied he could detect the angry person from whom it proceeded. Every exclamation of impatience he felt as a reproach, every shout he construed into an anathema. 'O, how fortunate for poor Em that she is not present!' he thinks; 'how can I tell her when I reach home? Her disappointment will be keener than mine, and heaven knows I suffer enough.' A fellow-actor, seeing Splodge's distress, takes him by the arm ere the result of the search after Diogenes Brown is known, and gently leads him to the shabby greenroom, where he cannot hear the yells. There, surrounded by his brethren, who sympathetically speak words of hope and comfort, he sinks his head upon his hands and sobs convulsively. Presently a light touch upon his shoulder causes him to look up, and Splodge sees before him manager Mountjoy. That eminent man is in a most excited state, and acquaints him that a gentleman (that curious fellow in the private box) is playing Tyke in a remarkable manner. The first act (the comedy is being given in the compressed form of three) is over; and therefore Splodge must pull himself together in order to be ready for the great scene which is to close the next act. 'Well, but who is this strange person?' asks Splodge, as the dresser applies the hare's-foot and tries to destroy the traces of the old man's recent emotion. Nobody knows, and nobody appears to care until the performance is over. The call-boy thrusts his head into the doorway and shouts, 'Now, Mr. Splodge, if you please, next scene.' Two or three of the actors standing by assist the old man to his feet: he walks timidly at first, but as he approaches the wings, his energy returns, and, drawing himself to his full height, he goes on to await the opening of the scene. The lights are lowered, the front scene is withdrawn, and then the audience recognise the interior of the cottage with Splodge as Tyke's father seated by the table. What a reception they give the old man! How lustily they cheer! It seems as though they were sorry for having previously expressed impatience, and were trying to make amends. Splodge knows this, and in the fulness of his heart wonders how he will be able to describe it all to his dear little Em. He is again almost unnerved; but Mountjoy's voice whispers from the wing, 'Steady, steady, old man!' and Splodge sinks his individuality into that of the aged countryman he is personating. After a few brief sentences there enters the Tyke whom Splodge has never yet seen. Something in the mysterious gentleman's accents send a strange and welcome thrill through his heart; but all unheeding he throws himself into the dramatic situation. Splodge *can* play this part—he knows he can; and a spirit of emulation rises in his bosom as he becomes aware of the class of actor he is playing with. It is the only scene in which the old countryman appears; but if there is a 'call' afterwards, Splodge is determined to share the honours. 'Tis a great treat for the audience; they watch the intellectual power of the stranger, and note the emotional fervour of the old actor. They are gazing at the efforts of no novices at their art, no Mountjoys. More and more intense grows the interest: boxes, pit, and gallery await breathlessly the mutual recognition of the old rustic and his erring son, who, by taking the money left by a benevolent friend to pay the aged man's debts, is committing another sin against his parent. What wondrous art, that can thus hold an audience

bound! Ah, the great situa-
omes! It is past! The two
have fallen into each other's
; and the curtain descends ere
udience realise that what they
been witnessing is but a mimic
. A few seconds to recover
ı, and then comes a shout that
ıt makes the building rock.
ı and again rise the cheers,
ntarily growing louder and
r, and then before the curtain
r the two actors, Tyke leading
ther. Splodge feels that he
arned his share of the applause,
once safely back to the wings,
fainting into the arms of the
rious stranger ere his fellows
rasp their old favourite's hand.
e close of the act was not al-
ner an imaginary situation.
ge, a few seconds ere the fall
curtain, had recognised, had
hat the representative of Tyke
none other than his own son
More, he realised from the
of his hand, from the expres-
of his face, that, although in
ostume of Tyke, his boy was
; no part; the words he uttered
the words of Thomas Morton,
ney nevertheless came from the
of his repentant and supposed
son. What words can paint
ther's joy, when, on recovering
enses, he found that it was no
ı, that his son was alive, and
ted of the prodigal life he had
rly pursued? Dick had been
gitated than his father, inas-
as he had prepared himself for
terview; and it was but a short
after the performance had con-
l ere they left the theatre to-
r. Once into the main thor-
are Dick hailed a hansom; for
as eagerly longing to see his
sister,' as he called her. On
ay he was about to tell his fa-
of the circumstances which had
his so fortuitously attending
eatre that evening, but Splodge
his hand, and whispered,
'Keep it all for Em.' The old man grasped the arm of his son, and even curiosity as to what had brought him back was stifled by the sweet consciousness that he had beside him his much-mourned child. Cabby whipped up his horse, and turned the corners as swiftly as though all the witches imagined by Tam o' Shanter were in his rear; but how long the time seemed to the two men in the vehicle! Ah, at last the street, and now the house, is gained.

Quick as they are in settling with the driver, Em is half way down the stairs ere the two men have traversed the passage.

'Is that you, papa?' she inquires. 'There's nothing the matter, is there?'

'No, dear, nothing at all. I only thought that, considering the special circumstances of the night—house crowded, Em, and such a reception they gave me!—I might celebrate the event by riding home. Have you got anything for supper, because I've brought a gentleman with me?'

'Well, father, come upstairs, and then you'll find out. Yet, no, stop a bit; you sha'n't come in just for a moment.'

She closed the door, and left them in the dark passage. Though the unmistakable odour of tripe and onions filled the whole house, Splodge pretended not to detect it, and when a few moments had elapsed, tapped at the door and called out,

'I don't believe there's anything but bread-and-cheese; you're humbugging us, Em.'

'No, I ain't,' replied Em from within, making a clatter with the plates. Then she came outside, and, without paying the least attention to the stranger—for it was of her father she was thinking—placed her hands before Splodge's eyes and led him into the room. 'Now, you dear old thing, open your mouth and shut your eyes, and see what Em will

give you!' said the laughing girl, keeping her hands over her father's face until she had got him immediately in front of his plate. O, how heartily she laughed when Splodge—hypocrite that he was—simulated surprise, and taking his seat prepared to attack the smoking meal! Then, and not till then, did Em look towards the stranger. No sooner had her glance rested on him than she limped to his side; without a word she drew away the thick wrap which half hid the lower portion of his face, and with an hysterical burst of joy fell weeping on his neck. The effects of a warm climate and the changes of time could not conceal the fact that her brother stood before her.

What a happy trio! After supper her father gave Em in detail the events of the evening. Then Dick had his story to tell. Saved from the wreck, but anxious to begin a new life, he adopted another name, had taken a situation in a general store at Sydney, and so securely won the good opinion of his master that he was now partner. Year by year the business had prospered, and they were about to open a branch-establishment in London. It was for this purpose—combined with the yearning desire to see Em and his father—he had returned to England. He only arrived that morning; but seeing a placard announcing Splodge's benefit, had determined to be present. The cause of his histrionic proficiency was to be ascribed to the fact that the family predilection for the stage had never left him, and that he had frequently played Tyke and other characters of a similar description in amateur circles in the colonies. Henceforward there was no necessity for his father and sister to labour, inasmuch as the profits derived from his business would be enough for them all. Dick was no vain boaster. The London branch took immensely; and when the misguided Mountjoy retired from theatrical management, a wiser if not a better man, and accepted a situation in a country banking-house, Splodge gave up his profession, and contentedly dwelt with his children in a small villa near the banks of the Thames.

It is far beyond the resorts of metropolitan pleasure-seekers; so poor Em is able in the fine warm days of summer to stroll undisturbed upon the grass-plot sloping to the river. The wheezy canary is still alive, and with his 'Tweet, tweet,' is as much a favourite as ever; he has not yet learnt to sing, but his mistress thinks him a paragon of the feathered tribe. Her room is at the most sheltered side of the house, and just beneath is a sunny bank, where the cripple cultivates the tender odoriferous flowers she had once sighed for in vain. Like herself they are very frail; but she carries into practice the opinion expressed upon her own health by an eminent physician, and smilingly says, 'that with care they may last some time.'

The summer passes, and the cold bleak days of winter come. At the first chill breeze the fragile flowers are borne into the house, the aged canary finds himself in his mistress's apartment, and Em spends the next few months in gazing from her window upon the varying phases of nature beyond. By and by her quick eye detects the budding leaves, the river sparkles in the spring sunshine, and once more she is able to quit her room.

Thus the seasons come and go; but in the little dwelling over which Em presides there is a perpetual sunshine, which no change of temperature can affect. Old Splodge, Dick, and their tender mortal flowret enjoy the tranquil splendour of a sun that never sets; it beams from their hearts, and is born of love, hope, and happiness.

TOLD BY A COMPRADOR

I SIMPLY tell it to you just as my old comprador told it to me,—no comment of mine could explain it, therefore I offer none,—but I can no more give you the story in the peculiar 'Pidgin English' he spoke (and which is so well understood by residents in the Celestial Empire), than I can give you the expression of calm credulity with which he told it to me. It was a magnificent night, and his grave monotonous voice made for me a soothing accompaniment to the whizzing of the thousands of insects which hovered about us. Carefully arranging his opium pipe, and looking dreamily along the glistening waters, he began:

The time and place suggest to me an extraordinary adventure, which happened to me about forty years ago. It was at the time when the 'Fanqui' (the name universally applied to foreigners in China) at Canton were offering enormous prices for silk; and I fancied I could see before me a prospect of making handsome profits, by personally purchasing the material on the borders of the province Szechuen, and bringing it back to Canton earlier than any others who might have been struck with the same idea. I provided myself with a Fanqui map, and pored over it long and anxiously; being rewarded at last by finding that I could take a creek to the west some hundreds of 'li' on my direct way, and so cut off at least one-third of my journey, and gain a valuable advantage over other travellers. I journeyed on, day after day, by the creeks; and at last reached the spot where I must turn westward for the new route. The junction of the creeks was at a village, and I lingered there for hours, seeking from the natives information about the way I intended to take. But, to my great astonishment, they only stared blankly at me as I questioned them; and showed, not only utter ignorance of the course of the western creek, but a certain dread of even mentioning it, which, nevertheless, no one explained, or even seemed to understand.

But as I felt a thorough confidence in the correctness of my map, and as so much depended on dispatch, I did not hesitate to proceed along the unknown creek. As I rowed on, I could not help remarking the desolate appearance of the flat bare country through which I passed. No birds sang, as they had sung to me through all the past days of the journey; and (which was more startling still, in a country where one never misses them) no insects fluttered about me, with their ceaseless and often intolerable noise. One early dawn, in this heavy and oppressive stillness—a stillness which was not rest but utter stagnation—I saw a great and beautiful city lying before me in the mists. Still none of the sounds of a great city met me as I approached it; over it, as over the whole country, lay that silence which was oppression; and the air seemed to come from a hot furnace. A crowd of war-junks, sanpans, and tankas covered the water; but I could see no sign of life within them, as I rowed up to the chain barrier which crossed the river. It was closed and locked. No sentinel challenged me, and after waiting in vain for an answer to my summons, I tried to force it. No guards or customs-officers came forward to question me,

and this, of course, was peculiarly strange in a country where imposts are levied with rapacity. Having with great labour broken the padlock from the mouldy post, I passed on, rowing among and between the empty rotting sanpans we had seen, and reached the water-gate, over which a heavy crimson-silk flag hung motionless upon its staff. Here again no human being met me, no one greeted or challenged me; and this barrier I found thoroughly impassable. Again and again I hailed the ramparts, meeting with no reply or sign of life. Louder and louder I hammered at the gates, without seeming to make myself heard, until at last a head was slowly raised above the wall. The face I met as I looked up had an odd expression upon it, which I could not understand. It was apparently the face of a man not more than twenty years of age, yet in every other sense it was an old and tired face; old with a weird agedness, tired with a total absence of hope or energy. I told my errand, requesting that the gate might be opened to me; but I received no word in reply, and the face disappeared behind the ramparts again. Some little time afterwards the massive gates were slowly opened to me by an old mandarin, who surveyed me in a sort of scared surprise, as I passed in and landed among a crowd of silent watchers. I was conducted at once to the guard-house, and there questioned slowly. But my answers were by no means fluent or easy, for I felt strangely awed by all I saw: the still grave forms around me; the expression of scared incredulity on every face, young and old alike; the dismal silent reception I had met with; the heavy oppressive stagnation of the air; and the indefinable unfamiliarity which struck me in all things. As I slowly answered the questions put to me, the old mandarin, who was my chief interrogator, grew more and more excited—or, I might rather say, less and less apathetic—and others, one by one, joined him in his questioning; until the faces, on all of which rested that weird look of age without its symbols, crowded together around me; drawing nearer and nearer to mine in ghastful eagerness, as I answered them that the emperor was well, and holding his court then in Pekin.

'Did they know so little of the proceedings of our emperor, Taon-Kwang, and of his capital Pekin?' I asked, wondering.

There ran an exclamation through the crowd. 'Where was Pekin? Who was Taon-Kwang?'

'Our emperor, of course,' I said, 'and Pekin our capital.' And I looked round, feeling that a great city such as this—a royal city evidently—could not possibly be in ignorance of such national facts, and wondering how it could seem to be so.

'Where, then, was the Emperor ——, and his capital of ——?'

I began involuntarily to laugh as I recollected that that emperor's name belonged to a time about one thousand years before, and that that capital was never even heard of now. But the laugh died suddenly, for it sounded most strangely out of place amid this odd assembly, whose laughter seemed to have been hushed for ever by some great stillness that hung above them; and I answered as I had answered before. They only echoed those two words, 'Pekin and Taon-Kwang!' The incredulous exclamation grew to fear, then horror. The white faces turned whiter; the eager surprise upon them grew to a terrible enlightenment. The cluster of listening figures were silent and motionless now, as if a breath had struck them into stone, and there was no movement until the old mandarin who had first addressed me sat down and hid his face. Then they all followed his

e, one after another; and I ft standing in their midst, ess with bewilderment. Im- at last, I asked to be taken ıe guard-house, and then the ın addressed me again, in a d, trembling voice.

anger, is all that you have d us *true?*'

r I had assured him that un- ılly it was so, he signed to the with his hand; and they went ıd left us two alone in the house.

fore we lead you to the palace,' , 'I have a story to tell you of y. Listen, stranger: I will it short, for it is horrible for ıs.

ıile the great emperor, of we inquired of you, was hold- ı court in his winter palace ı-gan-foo, he met the Tartar Song-fing, and, struck by her ıus beauty, determined to make wife. The day for the im- marriage was fixed upon, and grandees of the empire were ned to court; among them, of our master, Tong-ko-lin-sing, of this province and the ır's only son. He repaired at ɔ the capital, where was no- ıut feasting and rejoicing. In y first hour of his arrival, he fair and beautiful maiden sit- one under the magnolia trees palace garden. So lovely she ı well as so solitary and so de- that his heart went out to er and to cheer her; and only ninutes had they loitered to- in the fragrant shade when that he loved her, and that his return to his own pro- ıe must win her for his bride.

;, ah! this was the Tartar ı Song-fing, who was betrothed emperor, and Tong-ko-lin- tle guessed what he was doing was too late to stop; until ed her so passionately that his fear nor his affection for his father could stop him. They had many stolen interviews, in which their vows of love were repeated, and many secret meetings, in which their plans of escape were perfected; and when the day fixed for the royal wedding dawned, they two were missing from the court—they two, the most important of the assembled guests; the only two whom the poor old emperor loved.

'Travelling rapidly, Tong-ko-lin-sing brought his beautiful young bride at once to this his own city, and married her with almost as much state as his imperial father would have done. But no foreign guests collected here to celebrate the festival. The city gates were closed, and the ramparts manned. We knew how keen and fierce the emperor's wrath would be. We knew how he would hurl it over his son's dominions. We knew what restitution he would demand, and what vengeance he would pursue; and within the barriers we waited in dread expectation. The demand soon came from the emperor in threatening terms—the restitution of his bride and the surrender of his son's person, as well as the forfeiture of his territories.

'The city was in a state of rigorous defence; Tong-ko-lin-sing's army was loyal to a man; and so he at once hoisted the crimson flag of rebellion, sent back his defiance, and waited for the besieging army. Then came the emperor's anathema—the father's dreadful curse upon his only son, his son's wife, the viceregal city, and every subject within its walls; a curse sworn by the names we hold most sacred and most powerful.

'So, garrisoned and defiant, we awaited the royal armies; waited and watched until the watching grew painful and wearisome; but nothing broke it until your summons at our gates to-day. The flight of time has been unnoticed by us. No record of passing events has been taken. We have only been expecting the

attack of our wronged and angry emperor. The prince occupies himself in his inner palace, and seems to heed nothing but the thought that soon his wife and his dominions may be snatched from him, and he himself taken a prisoner to the capital. They are together always, as they have been since we opened the gates to them on that night which you say is nearly ten hundred years ago. There have been no births, no deaths, no marriages among us since; no joy, no sorrow. Everything has been still in silence and suspense; still with a heavy passionless stagnation. Every morning we have been prepared for a siege, and every night has found us waiting unchallenged at our posts; and never once until to-day has any one even attempted to enter our garrisoned city. Stranger, can it be that this fearful curse has been in operation almost a thousand years?'

I could not answer, for my mind was bewildered by this story; and I was bitterly regretting that I had ever ventured down that deserted creek. But when the old mandarin entreated me, in a low excited tone, to go with him to the prince, I roused myself and followed in his footsteps. In a gorgeous outer room of the palace he left me, walking on himself past the guards, who stood at their posts like statues, and through the groups of attendants, who moved listlessly about their duties. I had had time to remark everything about the room, when a dreadful cry from an inner apartment rent the stifling heavy air. To me, in spite of its tone of long-suppressed anguish, it was a relief; and I went on at once into the prince's presence, following the attendants and guards, who all rushed forward in a sudden panic.

I never can adequately describe the scene that was before me when I entered the gorgeous inner palace. Prince Tong-ko-lin-sing, a tall martial-looking man, in the pri[illegible] youth—yet with that same [illegible] look of age upon his face, which I had noticed on all the other faces—was leaning over a table, intently studying a long paper closely covered with writing still uneffaced and bright, though the date under the imperial seal showed that it had been written more than nine hundred years. On a cushion at the prince's feet, half lay, half knelt, his beautiful young wife, looking up into his face in vague bewilderment. Her dress was just the dress of the present day; for our fashions, as you know, do not change even through hundreds of years. The loose sleeves of her tunic—sky-blue satin, embroidered richly with gold dragons—fell over her clasped hands, the swansdown which edged them not whiter than her trembling fingers, and the large jewels glistening in her hair not more restless than her eager frightened eyes.

The attendants had lost their listlessness now; the unmoved faces of the guards had assumed a sharp keen curiosity; and the old mandarin, standing at the prince's side, was eager enough as he pointed with a shaking hand to the date upon the emperor's letter. As I looked, I knew that the full horror of their situation had broken upon them all. They had discovered, with a dreadful shock, the number of years they had been living under this curse, while he who had uttered it had been dead. I had brought them the first tidings from the busy, living world without; I had excited new feelings and sensations among them, and opened their eyes to the mystery which had so long enshrouded them. Perhaps now the spell, which had hung for a thousand years upon the city, might be removed. I waited breathlessly to see.

The guards leaned forward on their weapons, listening eagerly for a word to break the silence. The attendants hovered about the prince [illegible] speechless excitement. The prin[illegible]ss still knelt and looked with a

ɜd loving glance into her hus-
ɜ face. The maidens who sur-
.ed her drew closer together,
ous inquiry in their gaze. The
nandarin, breathing heavily,
.eld his tremulous finger on the
ıpon the emperor's anathema.
prince bent over the writing,
his brows knit in deep bewilder-
I stood watching the whole
le yet beautiful scene.
iftly, noiselessly, suddenly, the
;e came. The shields and wea-
dropped from the walls, falling
ut a sound upon the marble
The figures, in their rich
t dresses, crumbled into dust
ɜy stood or sat in their expect-
raiting attitudes. The palace
round me softly, silently; fell
ɜft me standing unhurt upon its
ıundation.
ading my eyes from the terrible
of magnificent buildings fall-
ɔout me without a crash, I hur-
hrough the decaying streets, and
ɜd my own boat again. As I
ɔo, I saw the heavy crimson
'all slowly from above the city
At the moment that it touched
'alls the boats that lay upon
aters sank, and the barriers fell
ɜ us. The last remnant of the
ı city melted in the vanishing mist, and there lay nothing now on all the flat and barren country to tell that human beings had ever inhabited it; nothing of this ghastly mystery remained to show that such a city had ever existed.

Quickly I plied my sculls, breathing with freedom once again. And now no hot heavy mist enshrouded me. The sun shone clearly; the birds sang, and myriads of bright and busy insects fluttered about me as I rowed.

I have never been able to glean any particulars of this city, though I have made ceaseless inquiries. Its history seems to be forgotten—as is the history of so many of our antiquities. I have told you all I know of it, and all that I shall ever know.

You may guess that I never again travelled by that westward creek, though by doing so on that one journey I had realised such enormous profits by being first in the market with my silk, that certainly if *anything* could have tempted me to try that route again, I should have tried it.

This was the story, as my old comprador told it to me.

CHARLES W. HAY.

Nagasaki.

THE GRAVEDIGGER

BY REA

hankless task is mine! Yet I
an aching heart lay by.
mortal voice can wake you,
mortal trouble shake you,
more the world deceive you,
more its coldness grieve you:
en I shall hush you to your rest,
world may do its worst or best.

ɾour lost love down to rest,
ɔ the cold earth on her breast;
ɾ far than the grave I ween
ɾuel, cruel world has been;
I lay her where she cannot know
The summer's heat or winter's snow:
Let them do their worst or best,
I have hush'd her to her rest.

Ye poor, who never roof have known,
I make a dwelling all your own;
Ye weary ones, when toil is past;
Ye aged ones, ye come at last;
Ye little ones, who fading soon
Like spring's white buds ere sun of June:
When I shall hush you to your rest,
The world may do its worst or best.

MRS. DUNCAN'S WILL

BY MARK HARDCASTLE, AUTHOR OF 'THE ARRANDEL MOTTO,' ETC.

I.

THE little church stands high upon the hill at Crossmyroof. It is not a handsome church at all, nor curious, nor famous; but I love it dearly, as I ought to love it, having lived all my life in its very shadow, and listened within its old gray walls while my father's lips taught me the one great lesson which has sanctified it.

We decorated it three times in every year: at Christmas, at Easter, and for the Harvest Thanksgiving service. But the Christmas decorations were what I took most pride in; and, being the vicar's eldest daughter, of course the chief of the work, and of the pleasure, fell upon me. The children (I mean my brothers and sisters) helped me always, and we had one of our own servants when she could be spared, besides countless village volunteers; but I always felt we should have been very much more incapable and unsuccessful if it had not been that old Mrs. Gotto made a point of having her grandson down at Crossmyroof for Christmas. He was so ready with his help; so quick to see what would look well; so tall and strong, that nothing we wished to attempt was impossible when he was there, and nothing in the work was a trouble to me.

Perhaps that was why I took most pride in the Christmas decorating,—for it *is* pleasant to meet with hearty sympathy and help in anything one undertakes; but perhaps it was only because Christmas was always such a happy time with me.

Sometimes Eleanor M'Laird came up from the hall to help us, and when she did she generally laughed, a little low aristocratic laugh, over my garlands and texts, and pretended to think the children had done them all. I was often glad that we were in the church when she said so, because hot words rose from my heart, and would have left my lips perhaps if we had not been there. She was an only child and very rich; and I was the eldest of eight, and had never known what it was to have a sixpence, the spending of which had not been anticipated. Her father was lord of the manor, with 3000*l.* a year. My father was vicar of the parish with 300*l.* But I think if she had felt the difference between us less, I should have felt it more—certainly I should have felt it in a better way.

Christmas-day fell on a Saturday that year, and it was getting quite dusk on the Friday afternoon before we had finished. Eleanor had brought a magnificent bouquet of hothouse flowers for the chancel table, and I stood watching her while she arranged them.

'They will not be moved, I hope,' she said, stepping down into the aisle again and addressing me, 'nor the cross I have placed above. James, just see that the cross is safe.'

James was the footman who had been sent to walk home with her; and while he did as she had bidden him, she repeated her question to me.

'No; no one will move them, Miss M'Laird,' I answered.

'Low Church people have such cramped ideas sometimes,' she said, passing on; and I sat down again to the wreath that I was making. How

.t the vicarage flowers were
hose which she had brought
ıe conservatories at the hall.
;ht this, working on with my
king little roses, while the
:ing shadows glided in under
vy porch, and crept along the
windows. I had heard voices
:hurchyard after Eleanor had
e church, and I knew that
Gotto (his name was really
s, but we always called him
had met her just outside the
and had stopped to chat. She
ıerally very gracious to him;
ı because he did not live in
ıyroof; perhaps because he
at charm about him which
led people to like him; per-
ecause he was so grand and
me that she could forget,
he was talking to him, that
only a poor young lawyer,
ing hard to win his own way
rld over whose wide extent,
l to say, there was no one
win it for him.

t finished?' asked Marq, stand-
ide me in the twilight, with
tle smile upon his lips with
ıe so often spoke to me. 'If
me hang it before we are
d in utter darkness.'

ed to hasten, but the string
angled every second.

a, your hands are cold and
ear. Give me the wreath.'

re it him at once, helping him
l it while his strong fingers
usly tied-in the last ivy and
eaves.

w hand me the nails, and see
tistically I will put it up.'

ood at the foot of the little
while the children, who had
l their task, gathered round.
the wreath was hung, he
down among us, and—quite
iously I think—laid his hand
e as he looked up at it.

flowers look very common-
eside Miss M'Laird's,' I said,
little sigh.

He laughed—the laugh deepening in his eyes as he turned and looked into my face.

'I think Miss M'Laird's garlands are as like herself as Miss Callaway's garlands are like herself. My fingers could not weave a wreath of hers.'

'That looks pretty now,' I said, still looking up.

'It is our wreath, remember. How long will it live?'

'Only over Christmas,' put in Tom practically.

'Indeed, sir!' laughed Marq, 'and may I inquire what Christmas you allude to? Now, Nina, is there anything else for me to do in this way?'

'I think not.'

But, though the children went home then, we two still lingered there, while the brilliant Nativity scene upon the eastern window grew more and more real, as the light faded without.

'I have one thing more to do, you know, Marq,' I said, as the choir came in. 'We have to sing the anthem over to papa.'

'That's right. I will stand here and listen.'

The singers lighted the candles on the organ, and bent over them to bring their light upon the music; but I knew the grand old anthem well, and stood back in the shadow, where I could see Marq leaning at the end of our seat. Often in the time that followed did I sadly remember how heedlessly I had sung the comforting words that night, while I watched his listening figure, and while the gorgeous picture of the Birth we sang of faded utterly.

Papa was detained in the village, so Marq and I walked slowly on together down the quiet lane; the darkness of the Christmas night deepening and deepening, and no star yet venturing out into the chilling air. Yet we lingered at every step, thinking nothing of the cold. Marq was telling me of that strange old Mrs. Duncan, who, ever since I

can remember, has lived alone at the old Priory on the other side of the hill. Of course, long ago I had heard the story of her cruelty to her stepson; and of the quarrel between them when his father died and left all his wealth unconditionally to her, the will never even mentioning his only son; but Marq was telling me other things—how Mrs. Duncan always sought his advice now on the most trifling matters of business; how often she sent for him when she was in London; how she was now ill at Torquay; and he was going to her in a few days.

'When lawyers get one good client they think their fortunes made, Marq, don't they?' I asked.

'I cannot quite answer for lawyers in general being so weak, dear; but one lawyer in particular is. I feel my fortune made. My only want now is—some one to share it.'

He was laughing, of course, and I laughed too.

'It is too great for you to spend alone, then?'

'It will be when I've earned it. I intend to have such a beautiful little home. A white house with roses and jasmine all over it, and a garden full of wonderful scents and unexpected corners,—just like your own home, Nina. And of course I shall want some one to share it with me.'

'Your grandmother,' I suggested.

'No, dear. My venerable ancestress is a strong conservative, declining to leave her ingle; and can you expect her primitive residence to hold me when I am a great man?'

'You remember the inquisitive bells of Stepney?'

'You want to know when that will be, do you? With your usual far-sightedness, you would insinuate that I am counting my chickens too soon. Never mind! I feel that I shall win success at last. Faint heart, as you are aware, never won fair lady; and as I mean to win her, my heart is very strong. That is the one great hope that leads me on, Nina. Stand here a moment, dear, out in the quiet night with me, and tell me that hope shall have its fulfilment.'

We were at the gate then, and I heard papa's step behind us on the frosty road. A new nervousness came upon me in my great happiness, and I hurriedly put my fingers on the latch. Marq laid his cool firm hand upon them, whispering very tenderly,

'I will not keep you here, my dear one; I will not urge you for your answer now. Give it me to-morrow night—on Christmas-night. Ah, little Nina, let it be kind. I have loved you with all the strength of my heart. You have been the one bright hope of all my life. Let the pleasant home of which I dream be mine. Give me the little wife I seek to make it bright and beautiful.'

Quite quietly we walked together up the garden, but when we reached the lighted hall I ran away up-stairs. After tea we had a long happy evening of Christmas games and music, and Marq seemed to lead everything, and was the wildest and the merriest of us all. Not till the bells had chimed the Christmas in, did we think of separating. Then the children were sent to bed, and Marq stood at the hall-door, lingering over his good-night; the frosty breath of the new-born day filling the hall, and we laughing and shivering as we stood there. He loitered so long that they all left us; then I gave him my hand that I might follow them.

'I wonder whether I shall reach home safely,' he mused, holding it while he looked round into the darkness. 'Nina, let me take what light I can. Let me have another look into the face I love.'

Moving back into the light, my cheeks burning, I stood and smiled my last good-bye; and outside in the gloom Marq raised his hat and brightly answered me.

Our wreath, he had said—Marq's

ıe! I thought it looked love-
ı among Eleanor's rare and
t flowers. The children and
:hing the church first of all
ıgregation—walked up the
'hispering how beautiful the
ng leaves and berries looked
ıe slanting sun-rays touched
Then I took my place in the
ınd in little straggling groups
›ple passed under the porch,
g in the Christmas sunshine
: faces. Old Mrs. Gotto came
on Marq's arm, and she stood
ent just within the door, look-
und upon the decorations.
looked up too, but his eyes
:ry grave, and I fancied that
ıghts were far away.
ı—in a hush which seemed
breathless hush of joy—we sat
the winter flowers in gleams
hine, while my father read us
sweet story, which has hal-
his day for every age to come.
ıe glad words of the anthem
ıe church as if we too, in joy
ınksgiving, would join the an-
orious hymn to-day.
had been home only a few
;, and were standing round the
rming our feet, when Marq
ı. I wondered to see him,
he never came to us on
ıas-day until evening, and I
ly wondered when — as he
ıands with us all—he wished
rry Christmas; forgetting he
ıe so in the early morning.
n sorry to say my Christmas
ʒ heralds my good-bye,' he
eaking rather nervously. 'Mr.
ıy, what do you think has
ed?'
›urse, papa said he could not
t all.
Mrs. Duncan has died at Tor-
nd—and—left me her heir.'
ısense!' papa said promptly.
›ke too gravely, Marq.'
, it is not a joke, sir; it is a
fact.'
she has a son, Mr. Gotto,'
began Tom, staring into Marq's face.

'No: but her husband had one.'

'And has she left her husband's wealth away from her husband's son?' I asked, breathing very quickly.

Marq simply answered, 'Yes,' without looking at me as he spoke. 'Since that quarrel nearly twenty years ago,' he added, as papa questioned him farther, 'she has never heard of this son, and has never tried to hear of him. He is not mentioned in her will, they tell me.'

'And the will is valid?'

'Perfectly so. The property was her own, to leave as she would.'

'Then the father's will long ago was as unjust as the mother's is now,' mamma interrupted.

'Old Mr. Duncan was entirely ruled by his wife, I believe,' Marq answered, 'and left her uncontrolled possession of the whole estate.'

'But he never could have imagined that she would will it away from his only son,' my father said. 'Why, the name and the estate have gone together for two hundred years!'

'Was Mrs. Duncan quite clear in her mind when the will was made, do you think?' I inquired.

'Quite so, as far as medical judgment goes.'

'There is no difficulty in deciding *what* was wrong in her mind,' said my father, gravely. 'How inveterate must have been her hatred!'

'What a rich man you will be, Marq!' said Tom delightedly, 'and you'll live at the Priory, and be greater than the M'Lairds.'

'Are you really very rich and great, Marq?' asked Elsie, raising her small inquisitive face, and trying—as I think we were all trying—to read Marq's.

He stooped upon the rug beside her, and I fancied that he did it to avoid our eyes, as he answered, 'Yes; I am a very rich man, Elsie darling; but not great yet. That I must try to be, now that the riches are mine.'

The words were spoken very slowly and very thoughtfully; and they fell upon my heart as a heavy shadow sometimes falls upon a sunny spot.

He had to start for Devonshire so early in the morning, he said, that he must bid us good-bye then. His grandmother would not hear of his leaving her again that day. We all shook hands with him as we stood round the fire; then he hurried away, saying he should be late for dinner, as he had to go round to the Priory.

'He speaks of the place in a tone of proprietorship already,' papa said, laughing a little. 'It will be good to have such a neighbour. I wish I had him for a patron. He will go into Parliament, of course, and be a great man, as he says.'

'Poor Mr. Duncan!' mamma said, as she and I went upstairs. And whether it was because I thought of him, or because I thought of Marq, or because I thought of myself, I don't know; but the joy and sunshine of that Christmas-day were gone. I had no fire in my bedroom, else I think I should have sat before it all that night, wondering and wondering. Yet I daresay that would not have made things any clearer to me than they seemed, as I stood for those few minutes at the staircase-window. It was to-night that I was to have told him whether the home he said he dreamed of should be his. Another home had been given him now, which took him—in one way—far from me. He was free. Since I had not accepted his love, he could not think himself bound to me, and would go into a different world now, and see how much more wisely he could choose.

'I know he will be a great man,' I whispered to myself, 'and I will rejoice in it as I live on quietly here. Perhaps, sometimes, when he feels tired of his state and grandeur, he will like to rest a few minutes in the old garden with 'its wonderful scents and unexpected corners;' and I shall be his friend — only his friend, but always true to him in my heart, whether he knows it or not. O, I am so glad that I could not tell him last night how I loved him!'

Yet though I said that I was glad, though I pictured the quiet friendship I would feel for him, my heart would beat so quickly when the letters came, that I dared not trust myself to look at them; and while I waited for them to be claimed, each breath I drew hurt me with a quick sharp pain.

Week after week went by, and no tidings came of him—no tidings for us, at least. Sometimes old Mr. Gotto told us where he was, but not often, and never what he was doing. Spring came. The roses and jasmine on the white walls of my house blossomed in their first fresh beauty; looking in at my window, and reminding me of many a happy springtime past, while the birds sang hopefully of many a happy spring to come. But still he never came.

Dreamily, in its full and perfect beauty, the summer followed; on all the land lay its flashing, radiant smile; but through these long bright days he did not come.

I listened to the reapers singing at their work; I listened to the lark echoing their song among the soft white clouds; but through all the joyous music of the autumn days there rang for me a sad, sad strain, because he did not come. Slowly and steadily there crept to my feet the lengthening shadows of that long winter, whose coming I so sorely dreaded.

II.

It was Christmas-eve once more, and I had just brought into the church my last armful of glistening holly-boughs from the porch. Under the pulpit stairs sat Eleanor, sewing letters of box-leaves on white muslin.

'Fear not—' The words grew under her fingers, and I read them

d over as I stood resting a
near her. She was talking
quietly and rapidly as she
but I did not follow her.
d then I heard 'chasubles,'
s,' 'albs,' 'baretta,' and many
which I suppose he under-
hough he hardly spoke at all;
only words which went to
rt were those her fingers left
e long white scroll.
ned to my work, ashamed of
ing which had been upon me
morning. I would not think
f any one who had been used
this task so light to me in
rs gone by. I would think
t happy Christmas thoughts.
y have you left that space
Vina? Sha'n't you put a
up as you did last year?'
Tom. I've finished now.'
nor had seen her text put up,
s leaving the church, wrap-
her rich soft furs. She hesi-
moment, looking curiously
face, where the colour had
orely against my will.
o made the wreath that hung
st year?' she asked Tom.
and Mr. Gotto.'
re you heard of Mr. Gotto
she said to me.
'
re you not?' and she raised
brows with languid surprise.
in London now. He is com-
n to stay with us, before he
ssession of the Priory. Papa
im at present in the personal
ment of the estate, but we
him soon.'
w soon?'
ed it in a voice so still and
less that it surprised me when
it.
haps to-night; I know he will
soon as he can. He agrees
that the Priory ought to be
d. It is the only house in
ighbourhood which I visit.
will bid you good-evening,
allaway.'

I had been going to give her my earnest Christmas wishes; but now my hands were tight upon the rails, and my tongue felt hot and dry.

'Then you won't put a wreath up there, Nina?'

'No, no.'

'How very decidedly you shake your head! Then we've finished, I suppose. I shall stop for the practice, and walk home with you.' As Tom spoke, he gathered up a few stray leaves and bits of string which we had let fall after the woman swept the church, and I carried with me the flowers I had not used. They were only the old simple flowers from our own garden and little greenhouse, but I thought how bright and fresh they looked when I laid them down upon my own seat in the choir.

We tried over our new anthem in the fading daylight; but papa, who stood to listen just where Marq had stood last year, decided that he would rather hear the old one. So we sang it once over; then with swimming eyes I went away, and left the flowers lying there.

The snow lay ankle-deep upon the churchyard grass next morning, but a path was cleared up to the porch, where the pure white flakes clung delicately to the dark old wood-work. How cold the church was! I sat and shivered in my place before I even cared to look at the effect of our decorations. Eleanor's cross was more beautiful than ever this year. Did it make her very happy to live among such beautiful flowers? Would it make Marq happy?

Thinking of him, my eyes wandered to where, upon that happy day a year ago, our wreath had hung. And there, just in the old spot, woven of the old flowers, another wreath was hanging now. The colour rushed to my face; a hot light burned in my eyes. Who but Marq himself could have done this? I recognised the flowers I had left in my seat last night; I recognised

the taste which had arranged them; and then I forgot all about the cold, and a great joy filled my heart as completely as the triumphant organ-notes now filled the church.

He came in with old Mrs. Gotto on his arm, and behind him walked a stooping sunburnt gentleman, with gray hair and a face lined thickly by something that had gone more deep than care. But I did not trust myself to look at Marq, and when we came out into the churchyard, they were gone.

As we lingered round the fire at home, I could not help fancying that Marq would come in to us just as he had come that day a year ago. Yet, when I really heard the footstep for which I had been waiting so long, I did not dare to turn. The children clustered round him, so I was the last whom he greeted.

'Nina, a merry Christmas!'

The words were so gay and yet so earnest, that I was ashamed of my own sudden shyness, and tried to answer in the same frank tone.

'I am come, you see, Elsie,' he said, taking her on his knee as he sat down among us, 'and nobody says how nice it is to see me. I think I will go back again.'

'Are you come to live at the Priory now?' asked Tom eagerly.

'No.'

'Who was with you in church to-day, Marq?' asked my father.

'Mr. Duncan, sir. He is staying with us over to-day; then he takes possession of his own estate.'

'What! old Mrs. Duncan's step-son!' we all exclaimed. 'Is *he* come back?'

Papa said quietly, 'So I thought.'

'Yes, he is come back—from the very farthest corner of the earth, one may say.'

'And did *you* bring him back, Marq?' I asked, feeling how proudly I was looking up into his face.

'Yes, Nina; I brought him back, with the aid of many lawful and unlawful means,' he said, with the old smile on his lips as he answered me.

'And—and—the wealth is his now?'

'The wealth has been always his, Nina; but there were some useless forms for me to go through; and those, with our long search and many journeys, have taken up a whole long year. Did you remember Duncan, sir?' he added, turning to papa. 'Did you recognise him?'

'Hardly, Marq. He was nothing more than a handsome careless lad in those days; now he looks a middle-aged man—one, too, who has passed through a hard and bitter battle with the world, and—I fancy—with himself too.'

'I wonder what old Mrs. Duncan would have said, if she had known how her will would be slighted,' put in Tom, laughing.

'Perhaps,' I said, looking into the fire, while the cheek next Marq grew very hot indeed. 'Perhaps she knew what Marq would do.'

'If she knew him well, she may have guessed it,' my mother added gently.

Yet I—thinking I knew Marq so well—never had guessed it! He laughed, giving Elsie a hasty kiss, and depositing her on my lap. 'I must go now,' he said, 'or Mr. Duncan will have exhausted all my grandmother's reminiscences of his ancestry. May I come in for the evening?' Every one answered eagerly except myself; but he smiled at me just as if I had done so.

What a happy day that was! And in the evening, when the fires burned brightest, and the shutters were shut, and the curtains drawn, Marq came.

The urn had just been carried into the dining-room, and I was in there alone, making the tea, when I heard him hang his hat and coat in the hall.

We were so many, I thought, that it would not do for me to put in a spoonful of tea for each of us

ne for the pot, but I did put in extra ones for Marq. I lin-, rearranging the flowers on able, and wondering whether had ever sat down to such a lable children's tea since he ıst been among us. Then it was :o ring the tea-bell.

I turned to leave the room he ıe, coming in with his old smile more bright and tender than it :o be.

ina, this is Christmas-night.'

nd tea-time,' I added, laughing, took my hands in his.

said I should come for my ans-n Christmas-night.'

ou said so, but never came.'

earest, do you not understand why I never came? Could I until I knew what life I asked) share with me? Could I of-yself to you a rich man, Nina, I knew that very soon I should or again? *You*, I know, would understood me, if I had told what I meant to do; but it l have been unfair to you in ɣes of others. If—if there had no one to claim the wealth, all, but myself, of course I could ırably have asked you to share h me; but not—not while I felt l it only in trust. I was to come ıy answer on Christmas-night, ; and here I am.'

.nd, Marq, here I am too.'

ıd then his brave happy face down to mine, and neither of us ; at first in our full content.

'ina, what have you thought of hrough this year of silence?' l Marq presently. 'Has it tried love, my darling?'

did not answer that, but shyly my place before the tea-tray.

'Ah, little Nina, it is impossible that you have trusted me just so firmly and entirely as I have trusted you.'

I knew I had not—O, so well I knew it!—and I told him so.

'You saw our wreath, Nina? Did it tell you what I meant it should?'

'Yes; and more, Marq.'

'It is very, very good to feel that that waiting time is over,' he said, leaning over my chair, while I first looked unmeaningly into the tea-pot, and then asked him if he would please to ring the tea-bell.

'Presently. The tea will be all the better for standing a few minutes longer. Duncan is so anxious to see you, Nina. He says he must always look upon us as his two first and firmest friends; and that the Priory must be always home to us. But, dear, through this long lonely year, I have been working with other aims besides the—relieving of my conscience. I have been working for that home I used to dream of; and now I feel it within my grasp.'

'And the roses and the jasmine?' I asked, looking up, and trying to speak easily, though my cheeks were crimson.

He answered me quite differently from what I had expected; and I began to put the sugar into the cups at random.

'Will *you* come with the roses and the jasmine, Nina? Surely, then I shall have waited long enough, my dear one!'

'O, Marq! do ring the tea-bell.'

For I knew the tea would be undrinkably strong if we waited any longer; and every one would laugh at me for putting in so much extra—just for Marq.

MY LAST NIGHT IN THE OLD COUNTRY

BY W. W. FENN

Long before the huge hotel and Charing-cross Terminus of the South Eastern Railway had risen so imposingly at the western end of the Strand, an event happened on that site, which, strange and terrible as it was, would have become a stirring episode at the Central Criminal Court, had not the imperative and immediate departure from England of a most important witness delayed the solution of the mystery until the occurrence had all but passed out of men's minds, and the death of an obscure waif of humanity had removed all possibility of the retributive justice of the law.

Hungerford Market was not approached from the Surrey side of the river by the suspension-bridge even, at the time of which I write; and many and confused, tumble-down and rickety, were the tenements which fronted or backed upon the river, where I am told the massive piers and arches of the railway now stand. There are several reasons why a too minute description of the exact spot should not be given; but my purpose will be served, if the nature and character of the locality be indicated.

I lodged in rooms which looked out upon the river in the front, and at the back upon a small sort of yard belonging to a public-house called the Fife and Drum, situated in an adjoining alley. This hostelry was not frequented by a very reputable class, but by a mixture of the low waterside population, itinerant musicians, jugglers, Punch-and-Judy men, and mountebanks of every description. Brawls and rows sometimes went on there far into the night, and rendered the establishment by no means a pleasant neighbour. But it suited me to live where I did, and as it was not to be for long, I bore the occasional inconvenience rather than undergo the trouble of moving. Moreover, the situation was pleasant, and at times very quiet; for there was no thoroughfare for vehicles, of course, as the street, at the river end of which stood the house in which I lodged, terminated by an iron railing. The hay and coal barges, during high tides, were raised sometimes within a few feet of the pavement here, when the small mud-larks of urchins about the place would establish a highway through the bars, backwards and forwards between street and boats. There was a short cut to my door from the adjoining street by the alley where the public-house was, and in making it, I often had an opportunity of studying the manners and customs in private life of the bespangled and flesh-tighted tumblers, who, in those days more frequently than now, I believe, were to be seen in the London streets, mounting on each other's shoulders, or clambering up a pole supported by one of their fellows. Not a very profitable study perhaps this, but it was one that fascinated me, and set me thinking; and I could not fail at last to become acquainted, by sight, with many of the leading stars of this nomadic profession, who, all in turn, seemed for a time to be my neighbours.

The public performances, too, of these artistes, and, indeed, all street entertainments, had ever been a source of attraction to me. My boyish tastes had lingered on into manhood, and I therefore sn-

to my proximity to the home of these gentry with rather a better grace perhaps than most people would have done. As the days lengthened, and windows were kept more constantly open, scraps of their conversation would reach me when in my bedroom, which, being at the back, as I have said, looked out upon the rear of the Fife and Drum. The talk was never very edifying, perhaps, to ears polite, but it was always amusing to me, and gave me an insight into the character of a curious, although a rather worthless set of people. By the time, however, that midsummer had arrived, my stay in England was drawing to a close. In a week more I should be on my way to the Antipodes, and my mind began now to be far too full of the future to give much heed to the petty squabbles of the poor miserable street tumblers. Nearly all my connections and friends had emigrated, and done well, so that, at the time I was leaving, scarcely any one in London knew me, except my landlady, and when I too should have departed her notion of my whereabouts would have been of the vaguest. Australia was my future address, and as I expected no letters which would require forwarding, I gave her no nearer clue to my future home.

The last night in the old country has arrived. All my preparations are complete. I have to leave very early in the morning to catch a train for Liverpool. Good-bye has been said, bills have been paid, and with a small hand-bag, the only portion of my *impedimenta* not sent forward, I am to quit the house before any one is astir. It is intensely hot. The days are at their longest, and dawn is almost breaking ere I rise from the open window of my sitting-room, where I have been gazing out upon the silvery river, wondering what fortunes will betide before I again look upon the huge city.

=e been speculating, now that it has come to the last hours, upon the policy of the step that I am taking. Animated by conflicting emotions, hoping yet doubting, full of sanguine anticipations, mingled with painful regrets, I have worked myself into anything but a sleepful state. Pipe after pipe has been smoked, and the approaching daylight alone has recalled me to a sense of the necessity of going to bed at all. I do so at last, however; but as my noisy neighbours, for a wonder, are perfectly quiet, and as the heat is overwhelming, I leave the window looking out upon the little yard wide open, despite its proximity to the foot of my bed. I hear St. Paul's and the myriad other clocks one after another, and some all together, strike three, and it is broad daylight ere I drop off to sleep. I begin to dream, immediately awake with a start, close my eyes, drop off, dream again—this time a very bad dream. I fancy I am at sea; I climb high into the rigging of the ship, crawl out to the end of one of the yards, try to stand up, lose my footing, and fall quite gently and pleasantly, and, as it seems, into the sea. I begin to swim, but can make no progress; my arms and legs move with difficulty. I catch hold of a rope which has been thrown to me; another instant, and I shall be safe!—when, ugh! horrible sensation! The cold nose of a shark touches my foot, and in a paroxysm of anguish I wake myself with the effort to draw my leg up out of the way.

Yes, I awake; at first with a sense of relief that it is only a dream, but a strange sort of cold shiver passes through me. The next moment a renewed and unaccountable anxiety is upon me again. Am I ill? I sit upright, trying to collect my scared wits, believing almost that I am still dreaming, when a large dark ominous-looking mark upon the white counterpane at the foot of the bed, which was not there before, catches my eye.

I spring out to examine it, and to my horror find that it is the imprint, in blood and dirt, of a human hand.

A closer observation verifies this fact, and on the window-sill I see even a more glaring token of the same kind. Shuddering, I throw the sash wider open and look out. The drain-pipe which runs from the roof down the side of the house, close to my window, bears, as high up as where I stand, scratches and stains, showing to my now preternaturally sharpened senses, that some one has recently gained an entrance by that way to my room. I gaze around it. The bright morning sun is now streaming straight in, and as I instinctively stoop to look under the bed, I see evidence of footprints as far as the door leading on to the staircase. I try to open it, but it is locked on the outside. Bewildered, but not losing my presence of mind, I go through by the folding-doors into my sitting-room overlooking the river. The tide is high, and as I crane forward out of the window to catch a glimpse of the end of the street, a man is in the act of dropping from the iron railings there on to one of the barges. I cannot see his face, for in another second he is running and jumping with the agility of a cat from one boat to another, and is suddenly lost to my view behind a huge load of hay. My first impulse is to shout, but I am quickly checked by the striking of the clocks, and as I count five, remember that I should be in another ten minutes on my way to the railway station.

The truth flashes across me, that if I give an alarm I shall be detained, lose my train and ship, and all the prospects upon which I have built so many earnest hopes will be lost to me for ever. I dare not hesitate. Whatever dark mystery I have thus unwittingly come upon must be cleared up by others, not by me!

Dressing in the direst haste, I pass out on to the landing by my front-room door, which is not locked.

'Who's that?' cries the well-known voice of my landlady, from above.

'Only I. Good-bye, Mrs. Hart, once more.'

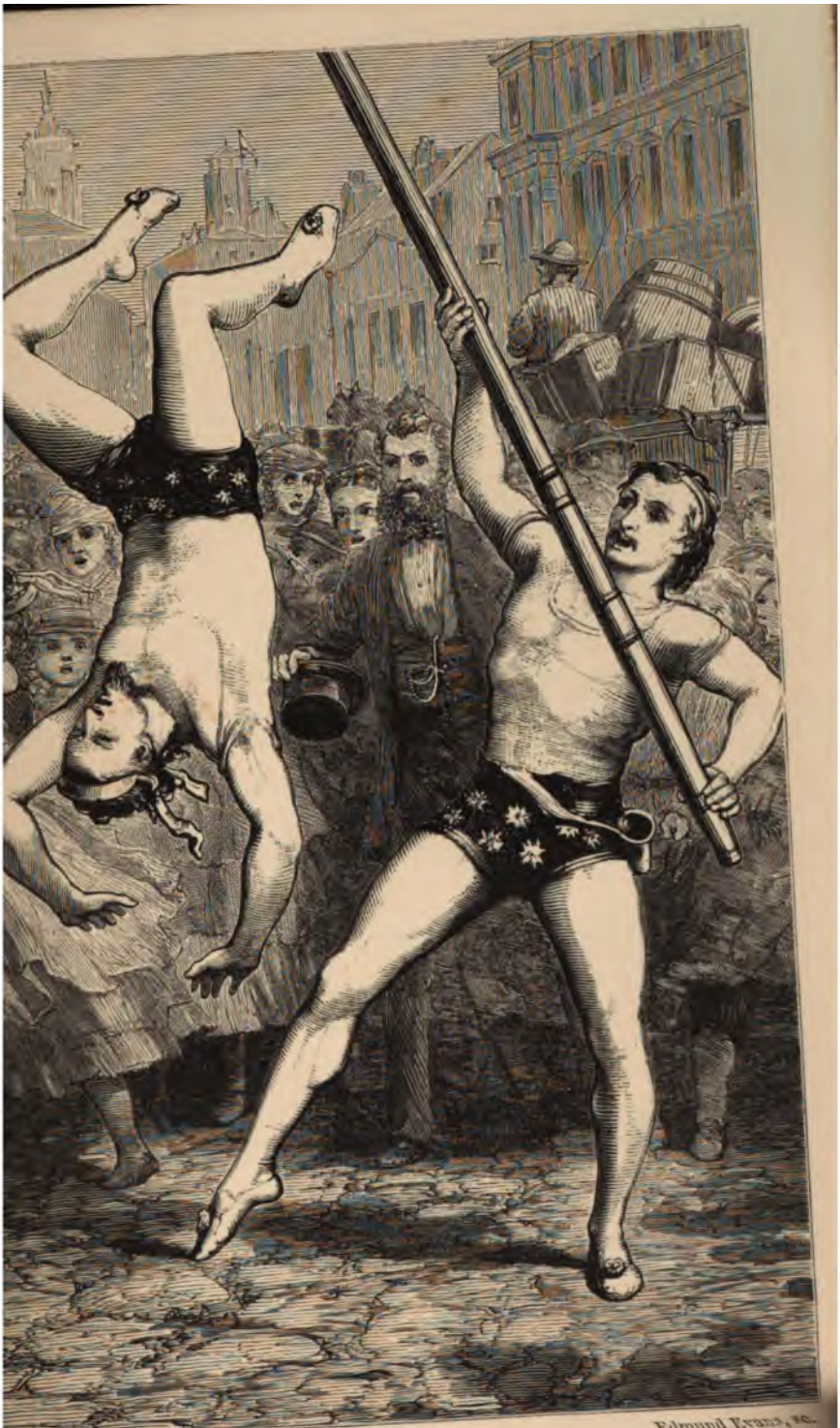
'Dear me! I thought I heard you go a quarter of an hour ago; somebody went downstairs!'

'It was not I; but I am late as it is. Good-bye again and again!'

I cannot even give her a hint of what has happened, for doing so will cause fatal delay to me. I must risk all consequences to save my train, so I pass down the stairs, and out by the street-door, which I see has been left ajar. Not a soul is stirring; I take a farewell look at the old quarters, and rush away through the bright but silent streets to Euston-square, carrying with me unavoidably a load of dreadful and hideous suspicions, which years and years do not efface.

* * * *

Prosperity in the New World followed my every act, and by the time the sequel to 'my last night in the Old Country' was worked out, I was living in very different quarters from those by the riverside at Hungerford Market. Again, I need not particularise too minutely the locality. To intimate that I was well-established in Melbourne as a merchant, and that I walked to and fro between my suburban villa and my office daily, is sufficient. The old inclination to stop and watch all shows and street performances was as strong as ever, and, laudably or not, I never failed, as the profession expressed it, to 'encourage talent;' but, at that time, there were but few of the 'tumbling' fraternity to be seen in our thoroughfares. They are the result of an overgrown population, and do not flourish much in the open air in a country where men of thews and sinews are often almost worth their weight in gold. The theatres



Edmund Evans, sc.

. H. Friston, del.

A TERRIBLE RECOGNITION.

ircus monopolised such acro-
and dramatic genius as the soil
ced; but occasionally the mild
mances of dancing on stilts, or
:hibiting an accomplished mon-
night be met with.

ıen therefore, one afternoon as
returning home, I saw a large
assembled, and a huge pole
from its midst, it is not to be
sed I passed by on the other
A good deal of shouting and
·beating was going on, and as
e up, I discovered that the pole
alanced and supported in the
; of a leathern belt, passed round
ins of a sturdy acrobat. An-
of the tribe, slighter in figure,
reparing to ascend this sort of
and did so, even as I watched.
ı the old trick which I had wit-
l many a time before in Eng-
but I do not remember that
then dignified, as it has since
by the high-sounding name of
rche.' When the mountebank
ached the top of the pole, he
ted several feats of daring and
;th, such as we are all familiar
but at last he assumed, when
utmost height, the attitude of
ı swimming, supporting him-
ith one arm and hand, whilst
ɔmach rested on the top of the
so that, in fact, man and pole
ıer formed the letter T. Then
;an to strike out with his legs
isengaged arm, whilst the bal-
of the pole beneath walked
and round in a small circle. It
ɔt badly done; the balance and
ɔn were steadily maintained for
.l minutes. The drums and
ɛan pipes were played with an
noisy triumph, and a murmur
lause arose from the crowd, as
stood gaping at the perilous
mance with upturned faces.

ɛsently the acrobat was just
where I was standing. I had
t moment removed my hat the
to watch him. He appeared
ıerve my action, and our eyes
met. Then suddenly he gave a sort of jerk, seemed to lose his balance, tried to recover himself, failed, and, in a second, fell straight down upon the ground head foremost, the pole at the same time also escaping from the grip of the holder!

A terrific shout and a scene of wild excitement followed. The pole had, in its descent, felled several of the spectators like oxen, and they and the unhappy tumbler, who was apparently dead, were eventually carried off to the hospital.

Two days later, I was seated by the side of one of the small beds in the accident ward. On it lay the crushed and maimed but yet living acrobat. I had called the next morning to inquire after the sufferers, and had been told that this man was hopelessly injured in the spine, but that he might live for some weeks, though he could never move his legs again. His intellect, it was thought, had also sustained a shock; for when he recovered his speech, he appeared to wander, and had talked about having been frightened; frightened by a ghost that he had seen in the crowd, which had taken its hat off to him, and had threatened him with its eyes. My action immediately recurred to me. I explained to the surgeon that *I* had taken my hat off the moment before the poor fellow fell, and I asked to be allowed to speak with him; for a strange anomalous feeling took possession of me. I felt at once compassion for, and a curious repugnance towards, him. I was both irresistibly attracted to and repelled from that bedside.

'I fear from what they tell me,' I began, 'that I was in some way the cause of your losing your balance; that by taking my hat off, I drew your attention from—'

'No, no!' hastily interrupted the sufferer, turning his haggard pale face and wild eyes upon me. 'No, it wasn't *that*. Many people take their hats off, but they haven't all got faces

like yours! They haven't all been sent straight across here from England; they don't all bring back times as I'd wish to forget! They don't all seem to say to me as yours did, "I know what you've done! I saw you just after you did it! I'll have you hanged for it!" They don't all say this to me;' and he looked anxiously round to see whether the nurse and surgeon were within hearing. Finding that they were not, and that indeed we were quite by ourselves, and closely shut in by a screen in a corner of the ward, he resumed in a whisper:

'I heard 'em say as I couldn't live long, and if so be that's true, I'd like to tell you what has lain heavy on my mind these six years past. If you be him as I suspect you are, you must have been sent on purpose to make me say what I believe no other man could ever have made me say. Your face made me miss my tip, and now I seems to feel as if it was a kind o' justice brought upon me; and if I am to die, you can't do me more harm than you have, and my mind will be the easier.'

He stretched out his thin but muscular hand and laid it on my arm, which was now trembling with a renewal of the old, horrible, long-haunting suspicion.

'This is not the first time as I've had my hand on you,' continued the man; 'and it's well for you you didn't move then as much as you are doin' now, or there might have been two to answer for instead of one! Put your ear down close, quite close. I climbed into your bedroom just after I'd done it—just after I'd paid off old scores with Tom Smart; just after I'd murdered him down there in the tap-room of the Fife and Drum, there by Hungerford Market. I and he were sleeping there; he'd got more than a month's swag lying under his head, for he was a regular miser, and he had never so much as given me a tenth part of our earnings for weeks. I grew savage as I saw it there right within my reach, and he, seemingly, so dead asleep; but I never meant to murder him! No, I never did; only when he caught hold of me just as I'd got it, and saw what my game was, he'd have strangled me like a dog if I hadn't caught up a knife that was lying on the table, and driven it straight into his throat. He dropped like a stone, and the blood spurted all over my hands! Then, when I saw what I'd done, I knew I must get off somehow. So I crept out into the yard, and I was like a rat in a pit; but I saw a window open just above, and I swarmed up the drain-pipe, feeling sure I could get out there somehow. As I was a-stepping into the room I stumbled, and, trying to save myself, put my hand right on your foot before I knew it. Then, for the first time, I saw there was some one in the bed. The sun shone straight on your face, or else I shouldn't have remembered it so well; and I thought you was a-going to wake, for you drew your legs up quite quick, but you never opened your eyes; and maybe, it's well for you you didn't; and so I got away and locked your door to make all safe. I crept downstairs, and out into the street, and nipped over on to the barges, and was never taken! No, nor so much as ever suspected! I found my way to the docks, managed to get aboard a ship that was dropping down the river that day, bound for this country, and hid myself (a stowaway they called me) till we got to sea. They threatened to throw me overboard, but I showed them I was strong and active; they let me help them, and we was all good friends at parting. Hereabouts I've been ever since, in the old line, but I've had a hard time of it in my mind, and have been well-nigh mad more than once. it preyed so on me. I've been give myself up over and

again, for I could not bear my ;hts; and I see poor old Tom . after night sometimes, just as t him. Then all of a sudden s your face, for I knew it again, just at once! I turned reg'lar ', I lost my hold, and remem- othing more till I found myself s bed.'

:re, then, was that horrible im- on the foot of my bed accounted The cold nose of the shark, and hole surroundings of that terri- ·eam, had been suggested to my ng brain by the single and in- ıneous touch of the murderer's on my foot. The incidents, . appeared to cover a consider- time, had been engendered in lashed through my mind with lightning-like rapidity which tutes the greatest wonder of ıland. It was well, indeed, ıe that I did not immediately ', as I supposed I had done, or such a desperate character as ıan then was standing over me, that night might not only have been 'my last in the old country,' but my last on earth. The miserable but repentant criminal died suddenly the day after he had made his confession to me. I told the authorities all about it, and they duly communicated with those of Scotland-yard. The mysterious murder, naturally, had created much excitement in the neighbourhood at the time of my departure, but the obscurity of the wretched victim, and the absence of any clue to the perpetrator of the deed, beyond the marks on the drain-pipe and in my room, showing the manner of his escape, together with the impossibility of finding me, allowed it to merge into that oblivion which has encompassed so many other crimes of the same kind.

My presence, however, on the scene of the acrobat's final performance had acted as a Nemesis, and had avenged the murder perhaps more terribly than if it had been dealt with by the hands of the law.

HAUNTED

has been done in the olden time
ıis chamber dim and low?
a deed of guilt or crime,
d wrong or stealthy blow,
ı acted again at midnight's chime
ı clangour of wail and woe?

ho shall tell? Not the pallid walls,
he dusky lattice pane;
.t that flits as the last stroke falls,
he panel's crimson stain,
the tapestry waves in phantom palls
e with weird forms again.

re as ever the hour comes round
aviness chills the air,
stle of silk and a footstep's sound
heard on the creaking stair;
moving past, o'er the echoing ground,
esence unseen is there.

Slowly it climbs, with a hollow pace,
You can count its progress sore,
Till it stops and lists on the landing-place,
Then tries at the fasten'd door.
As within are shrieks and a struggle's trace,
Dull *thuds* on the oaken floor!

'Let me in!' it always pleads and moans,
'Let me in!' the same cry goes;
But no answer comes, save the dying groans
Of a soul in mortal throes.
Then it sobs, and glides away, while its tones
Ring out on the dread repose.

Sadly, wearily, downward it wends
To the spot from whence it came;
Thank heaven, with daylight the glamour ends
This horror without a name,
That all the warm life-blood quivering sends
Like ice through the thrilling frame.

J. G. STUART.

OUR JUNIOR PARTNER

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE WINNING HAZARD,' ETC.

It is not often that a man gets a real view of himself. I don't mean the dressing-glass view, which you may have as often as you like; nor the forensic view, if I may so call it; subjective outlooks both, revealing only the man as he stands in relation to other humanities, but of the real ego nothing. I don't know how it was, then, that one sunny morning in June the sight of my image, reflected in a large plate-glass window in Cockspur-street, came to me as a revelation. The outward view was this: of a provincial, evidently from the manufacturing districts, stooped in shoulder, lined in face, wearing dark clothes of a villanous cut, and a hideous stove-pipe hat. A hammerman only, a fashioner of rude uncouth masses into smoother and uglier forms, such divine light as might once have been given me burnt in devotion to the hammer. And yet I, this unlovely lump of humanity, had in earlier days been even as the graceful well-adorned youth who are now sunning themselves in bright west London.

Yes, actually, ten years ago, I, John Brown, of the Buttermilk Iron Company, Bunghole-moor, Yorks, was a junior clerk in the Navigation Office, and in my small way a swell. Since then for ten long years had all my former life been put out of my thoughts, and with the clang of iron and roar of steam in my ears I had been hammering, hammering, till at last I had hammered a sort of shape and purpose into the dark hard life which was mine.

I had come up to town to give evidence on armour-plates before a select committee. We had been down in Woolwich Marshes hammering with monster guns at monster plates all that morning, and I had come back to town with a proud sense of triumph at my heart, for the Buttermilk plates had proved the toughest and truest; the biggest shot had dropped from their pitted fronts like a cricket-ball before the bat of the cautious Maryleboner. So, having finished my business with the War Department, I gave myself up to idleness for a few hours, and strolled down Pall-mall, enjoying the warm sunshine and bright life about me. I had almost fancied I was again the swell young clerk in the Navigation Office, when I came unexpectedly on my image in the plate-glass window. And then the contrast between that which I had been and that which I was set me thinking of my old life and of my old friends. Chief among these last had been Henry Clinton, also of the Navigation Office.

Although Harry and I had been intimate friends, yet was he always a mystery to me. He hadn't a penny except his pay, which wasn't much, and yet he always contrived to live in the swim of extreme swelldom. Certainly, his great-grandfather had been the Marquis of Wallsend; but then a man can't live on his great-grandfather. His great-grandfather won't pay his club-subscription or his dinner-bills, and Harry was a member of the most expensive and most exclusive club in London. Nevertheless, master Harry was a prudent lad. The only use he made of his club was to write

s on the club-paper, or to stand
: bow-window on high days to
:n of men.
ad lost sight of Harry altogether
any years; and was rather cu-
now to know what had become
n. The Navigation Office was
at hand. I would go there,
iquire for Clinton.
ithin the dull quadrangle of the
gation Office an under-secre-
brougham was standing. A
1 on horseback was leading a
:ome park-hack round and
, just as of old.
iide there was a wonderful
:e. It used to be such a so-
quiet, aristocratic place. Now,
entered, I was nearly knocked
by two men in paper caps,
ng a plank bierwise on their
lers. There was a cheerful
of hammering, there were in-
ating clouds of dust. Carpen-
and masons were exchanging
y greetings. Piles of huge
ies encumbered the hall. The
ngers flitted to and fro like
hosts of a former world among
is chaotic new birth. I man-
at last to find the hall-porter.
'here shall I find Mr. Clinton?'
shrugged his shoulders and
l his hands.
eally, there's no saying where
of our gentlemen are now.
:s is that upset—'
ut he is here?'
yes, sir. I'll try and find him
u.'
:er conferring with several mes-
rs on the way, and taking me
id down several passages, he
ed at the door of No. 45.
:re was no mistaking the ring
: 'Come in!' which followed
iock. There was no one visible
: room when I entered, but
a little ground-glass box where
id been doing his toilet, there
Harry Clinton, radiant and
lid; just the same as of old,
:oned down a little—more of
the gentleman and less of the swell
about him.

He looked at me bluntly for a
moment, then, as he heard my voice,
he came forward, and grasped me
by both hands.

'Jack, old fellow, how glad I am!
Come, let's get out of this beastly
hole. I want to talk to you for a
week.'

As we left the quad., the groom
touched his hat.

'O, take the horses home, Brook.
I shall walk.'

'You'll come and dine, of course;
and send for your traps, and stay
with me. Must go back to-night?
Well, dine, at all events.'

Yes, I would dine with him. We
strolled leisurely down Pall-mall,
talking of old days, till we reached
the Athenæum, when Harry gripped
me by the arm, and said:

'Now, Jack, turn round quickly,
and see if you can spot a fellow in
black—seedy man, like a bankrupt
undertaker—hanging about.'

I turned, and recognised such a
man strolling along, with his hands
in pockets.

''Gad, that's capital! Jack, it's
the greatest fun in the world. You
remember what a jolly gentlemanly
place our office used to be?'

I nodded.

'Well, we've changed all that.
The manufacturing districts have
come down upon us bodily, and
swamped us. By gad, they have!
And without wishing to hurt your
feelings, Jack, they're a scurvy lot!

'Well, our new chief is, I fancy,
a Scotch hawker; something of
that sort—a beast, in fact. He
called me "young mon" the other
day; and when I told him my name
wasn't Mon, but Clinton, he said
that it was evident that the dee-
siplin' of the office was in a shack-
in' state.'

'But, Harry,' I said, 'you must
acknowledge they've ferreted out
some very foul places.'

'O, there's a use in the world for scavengers and detectives, only, don't you see, I object to be brought into contact with them. But for my story. You can see, Jack, that my way of living isn't that of a man with only four hundred and fifty pounds a year.'

I nodded.

'Well, the beasts suspect me, it seems, and have put detectives on to me; and I get a deal of fun out of them. I make appointments with my butcher—he's a sporting card that, and is a member of Tattersall's; and with Spinyall, the livery-stable man—he's breaking-in a colt for me—and I meet them in odd shady little places about Westminster—they think I'm mad, but that don't matter. And wherever we meet, I see two or three seedy cards dodging about round the corners; and each of these respectable tradesmen has a man apiece walking behind him, and tracking him everywhere. It's capital fun. I'll swell their estimates for them, the d—d cads.'

Harry shook his sides with laughter; but I looked grave, and said,

'You shouldn't play with edged tools.'

When we reached Harry's house, a pleasant mansion in Hyde-park-gardens, the dark little man was still behind us, strolling carelessly along, with his hands in his pockets.

We had a very pleasant little dinner. Mrs. Clinton was a very lovely agreeable woman; and after dinner appeared two jolly little cherubs, a boy and girl. We then went up into the smoke-room,—an airy chamber on the second-floor, looking over the Park, with flowers on the balcony. There we smoked and drank cold brandy-and-water, talking over the old days.

'You remember, Jack,' said Clinton, 'when old Chouser, your cousin, carried you off to the North to put you into his foundry, how that you introduced him to me, and how I said, in my grand way, that I'd be glad to see him to dine with me at Bodgers'? Well, he came one day, and looked me up at the office, and I took him to Bodgers', and dined him in the strangers' room. That pleased Chouser immensely; for I got Wallsend and Lord Bowster to join us; and your manufacturing fellows are bigger toadies in their coarse way than anybody. After that there was nothing he wouldn't do for me. He'd come down to the office in the morning—"Harry, my boy, come and dine. We've two Miss Wainwrights from Manchester with us. Fifty thousand apiece." We Moslems reck not much of blood, Jack, and to a man who has only expensive tastes and twopence-halfpenny a year to live upon, fifty thousand is a temptation. But they were so hard—hard as nails, Jack. I couldn't stand them. Chouser got quite crusty about it. But one day he came down to the office quite softened. "Harry," he said, "I want you to do me a service. My niece, who married Colonel Lutestring of the 88th Hussars, is coming home. Lutestring is dead. She's coming by the Atrato, which is due at Southampton to-morrow. I've only just heard, because the letters were in the Cadmus, which was wrecked in the Red Sea. I've sent Mrs. Macender, my housekeeper, to meet her; but she's such a daft old body, and my sister's up in Edinburgh. Now, will you go, there's a dear boy, and look after her, and bring her back to Carlton-terrace?" I went, Jack. A man don't care about talking of his love-passages with his wife, but I may say that, as soon as I saw her dear sweet face in widow's weeds, my heart went right out to her. We were like brother and sister for a whole year—a whole long year, Jack—and then I ventured to begin to make love to her. Chouser approved—I believe the old beggar

meant it all along—and he gave us fifty thousand on our wedding-day. And yet, Jack, although I've got everything the heart of man can desire, I'm not altogether happy. I don't seem to have earned it; and my life wants an object.'

'Ah,' said I, puffing out a big mouthful of smoke, 'where's that fifty thousand invested?'

'By Jove, I don't exactly know. In something of Chouser's. I get about ten per cent for it, I know that; paid into my banker's once a quarter.'

'Then, Harry, it's in the Buttermilk Iron Company. I know we've got fifty thousand marked off in the private ledger, H. and E. C., and we pay the interest regularly into the Bank of England; but I'd no idea it was yours. Why, Harry, in a kind of way, you're our Junior Partner.'

Harry made a face. 'Non olet nummus.'

'But, Harry,' I said, 'you want an object in life, you were saying; here you have one cut out to your hands. Chouser wants to get out: he wants to be a privy-councillor, or something of that sort, and he can't whilst he's a government contractor. Leave your red tape, old fellow, and come and join us. You shall be the London manager. You understand the dodgeries of the public offices, and you'll be invaluable in getting our contracts out. You shall double your income, and rule men instead of ruling paper.'

Harry stroked his beard in a meditative way.

'I don't think it would do, old fellow. I'm too old to learn new tricks; but I'll think about it too. I say, though, if you must go by the 9.15, you've no time to lose. I'll drive down to King's-cross with you and see you off.'

'Harry,' I said, recollecting myself just as we were starting, 'I forgot that I hadn't money enough about me to take me home. You can give me some cash for a cheque, perhaps?'

'I daresay I can; how much?'

'Say twenty pounds.'

I sat down and wrote out a cheque. Harry handed over four five-pound notes, and thrust the cheque into his waistcoat pocket.

As we walked across the forecourt to the hansom, I saw, leaning against the rails close by, the dark figure of a man. Fifty yards behind us a second cab was drawn up to the kerb.

Arrived at King's-cross, and having taken my ticket, I found that the man in black was still close to us; he had been looking over my shoulder when I took my ticket; he had satisfied himself, by examining the portmanteau, that I was the intending passenger, and not Clinton. Still he looked sharply about him from side to side, hanging close to our heels, as though afraid we should slip out of his reach.

Harry didn't notice him; had got so used to him, perhaps, that he had ceased to care about him.

I noticed, too, that two men were standing by the booking-office door, who didn't seem to be going by the night mail. There seemed to be a certain correspondence between the two men at the door and the third man, who was following us up and down the platform.

'Come into the carriage and sit down till the train starts, it's so awfully draughty on the platform,' I said, without lowering my voice.

We got in, and sat down. The guard locked us up again, and took a turn on the platform, his whistle between his fingers, expecting the signal to depart. Looking through the window, I saw the little black man sidle up to the guard. I knew the guard well; he was a Yorkshireman from Bunghole Moor; I had helped him to get his present appointment; the hottest footwarmer, a

compartment to myself, unrestricted smoking in unauthorised carriages, were at my disposal through his good offices. I called him to the door, whispered to him; he nodded, touched his hat, and resumed his walk. Presently old Buckthorn rushed foaming on to the platform, almost too late for the train; a porter rolling a truckload of portmanteaus and hat-boxes galloped after him; then a flying valet, his hands full of dressing-cases, coats, and despatch-boxes.

'Harry, that's Buckthorn, the wild boar of the Bungholes; see, he's coming here; no, he sees the hated face of a Buttermilk man. That fellow, Harry, passes his life in a perpetual conflict with the industry which has made his fortune in spite of him. His hall and demesne are right in the centre of the iron district, and he tries all he knows to keep them in the exact condition they were in the time of William the Conqueror.'

Buckthorn and suite were packed into the train, the hand of the clock at its next pulse would have marked the quarter, the little black man—ah, the little black man! The whole train of circumstances connected themselves in my mind in the flash of a moment—that Harry would be pounced upon, a row, a scandal, and with it all the revengeful eyes of Buckthorn gleaming on the scene in delight at the humiliation of one of the hated brood. 'Ironmaster, robber, scoundrel!' he would roar no doubt. 'Lock 'em all up, rid the country of the rogues!' The little black man, joined by the two others, was now approaching the carriage-door. Harry jumped up, and vowing it was time to go, tried to open the door. It was locked.

'I'll tell the guard, Harry,' said I, thrusting him aside.

I did say something to the guard. He blew his whistle, the train began to move. The black man made a dash at the carriage-door; the guard caught him round the waist and swung him back. There was a great bustle and shout and hubbub on the platform, heard for a moment, and then lost in the rattle of the train.

In the mean time Harry and I had been fighting. I couldn't help being a little rough with him, he struggled so hard to get out. I am pretty stiff and powerful even for a Yorkshireman, and an occasional turn with the hammer at my experimental forge at the Buttermilk works, keeps my muscular system well developed. So I held him back in his seat in spite of his struggles, and after a moment he ceased to struggle and sat still, staring at me, his face quite livid. Poor Harry! I well knew his thoughts for that one bad minute—that he was in the grasp of a madman; that his last hour had come; of the wife who was waiting at home for him, of the children sleeping in their little cots; a wild whirl of emotions; and with them all an intense curiosity, the supreme consciousness standing aloof and wondering in great awe, as in the very portals of doom. A vision of sudden death, indeed, too solemn for my pen.

The train was now at speed, waking the echoes of Holloway with its shrieks.

I released Harry from my grasp.

'We don't stop till Peterborough,' I said, laughing; 'but you can get back by the 1.45 train.'

Harry tried to smile: he had made up his mind to humour me evidently, fearing another paroxysm.

'Didn't you think I was mad?'

'And if you're not mad, I should like to know what the devil you mean?' roared Clinton, recovering his temper, and evidently determined to punch my head if he could.

'I'm sorry I was so rough, but I couldn't help it. If you hadn't come on with me, you'd have been arrested at King's-cross.'

'And if I had!—I don't care for the beasts.'

'Harry, you know that we Buttermilk people are large contractors for iron plates?'

'Of course I do. I'd some papers through my hands to-day, referring to you.'

'And haven't you got a cheque of mine in your waistcoat pocket? Put this and that together, and see if there wasn't a *prima facie* case against you. You see what it is to play with edged tools.'

'But what good will it do taking me to Peterborough? won't they telegraph?'

'No; because the bobbies see we've spotted them, and they know that they have no evidence to justify them. They hoped to find something on you—don't you see?—and now they'll know you're on your guard. You'd better hand back that cheque, though, and I'll destroy it.'

We had now passed away altogether from the town, its lights and houses, and were scudding across the country; it was a fine night, but very dark. The windows were wide open, letting in the balmy air of June.

Harry felt in his pocket for the cheque, found it, and held it in his hand towards me. I was fumbling for my purse to get the odd notes. I found them, and looked up at Harry, who sat there with the cheque unfolded in his hand. But as I stretched forth to take it from him, a dark arm was stretched between us, a dusky hand grasped the cheque, and then disappeared in the night.

We looked at each other in dismay for a moment; then I opened the carriage-door, and let myself down on to the step. Yes, sure enough, there was the black man clinging to the handle of the next carriage, making his way as well as he could towards the break-van. The danger was at the junction of the two carriages, in springing from one step to the other. He was balancing himself on the end of the step of our carriage, preparing to jump to the next, when I overtook him and put my arm round him. The roar of the train, the rush of the wind, almost prevented me from thinking. The carriage shook and heaved; I had enough to do to hold on with one hand, whilst with the other I grasped the black man. I could just hear Harry's voice; he was shouting 'Come back!'

But I wouldn't go back. I was mad at being outwitted. The smallness of my stake in the matter, the risk I ran, were as nothing. I was a Yorkshireman, and bound to win—to win, at all costs. I felt that the man I held was a stiff and wiry fellow, not to be overcome without a desperate struggle, the sooner commenced the better. I had my right arm round him just under his arms, as he stood facing the side of the carriage. By an effort with my right, I reached his right arm, and grasped it firmly. His right hand held the cheque, I thought. His thumb was towards me as I sat with my back to the engine; he could hardly have changed it into his other hand. My hand reached his wrist,—his hand, which was clutching an iron stanchion of the carriage. I could feel a corner of the crisp paper of the cheque. As I gripped his fingers, he no doubt felt that he must either give up his hold of the iron, or that I should force open his hand and seize the paper. He let go the iron. We then stood swaying about on the step of the carriage, he holding on by his left arm, I by mine, only saved from destruction by the grip we had of each other. I was stronger in the arms than he, stronger in the wrists; but he was stronger in the fingers. His fingers were like steel springs; but under the firm pull of my arm his hold on the carriage relaxed. I felt that his left arm was giving way, that he must inevitably

fall that I must fall with him, if I did not fling him from me. I had the strength to do it, but my soul sickened at the thought. Would it not be *murder?*

He let go, and swung round upon the step. I, too, let go, clasped him with both arms, and with all my strength leaped from the carriage-step. It was a toss-up for death: the one who came to the ground first would be killed, the other might be saved.

The last thing I remember was that the harsh roar of the train was changed to a softer tone as we leaped from the carriage-step. Then there was a moment of blackness. Had I indeed been killed, and was my soul falling through chaos? A violent blow on the side convinced me I was still in the flesh. There was then a rushing and bubbling of waters in my ears: then I felt my heels kicking on the gravelly bed of a river. 'O Lord, methought what torture 'twere to drown!'—A dream that only:—but for the rush and furry of it, drowning would be easy enough. If it hadn't been for that hardening process, the secret of which was mine only and would die with me, I wouldn't so much have minded stepping there among the sedges. But for the Buttermilk Iron-works there must be a struggle. Among the gravel and weeds at the bottom of the river the struggle was fierce enough: but at last the grasp of the little man relaxed, and just as suffocation seemed to be wringing my soul from my body, I felt myself free, and struck a few feeble strokes towards the light. In a moment my head popped up into the air, and instinctively I paddled on to the shore. I was nearly done for, too. I crawled on to the bank, and lay there breathless for a while. It was a narrow sluggish stream out of which I had just emerged. It widened out lower down into a marshy pool. The full orb of the moon was rising just over this pool, throwing a yellow, lambent, quivering light, a broad path of glory, right up the rippling stream, stirred by the breath of the night-wind. As I lay there, breathless, senseless almost, I was yet strangely moved by the sight of the moon. I raised myself on one elbow, and stared intently into the glowing light. Was there any comfort left for me in all this world whereon the moonbeams shone?—for me, who had on my soul the life of a fellow man?

I lay lengthwise along the bank, prone, among stumps of willows and clinging water-plants, and as I looked full into the face of the moon, suddenly between me and it was raised a human hand and arm, the finger raised as in warning or menace. Good God! was it the dead man's hand from the pool which was raised to denounce me? I think my senses almost left me.—I lay there, still gazing at the moon, but the hand had disappeared. Suddenly I felt a hand upon me, passed gently over me as I lay—a hand and arm, and a hot breath on my cheek. In terror and horror I seized the hand, and threw my other arm out, grasping—a leather legging with very hard buttons.

'O, Lard, Lard! marcy 'pon us! O, Lard! Marcy! 'tis the keeper. O, Lard! Mr. Keeper, lemme go this time. I'll ne'er lay night-lines ag'in.'

I rose and confronted my ghostly visitant—a stout rustic in a dark smock. He had been crouching by the bank laying his lines. It was his hand, no doubt, which had appeared athwart the moon. As we both rose into the light, a voice hailed us from the other bank:

'Hullo, guv'nor, what part of the world do you call this?'

It was my friend in black, the little detective. I knew his voice. Good heavens! I could have embraced the man I would have killed ten minutes before.

'O, it's you, Mr. Brown, is it? Well, I'm glad you ain't drowned, after all. You ain't going to fight for that bit of paper, are you, any more?'

'No; you have stuck to it well. I'm finished. Wish you joy of it.'

'Honour bright, sir?'

'Honour bright.'

The rustic had listened in terror to this mysterious conversation.

'Show us the way to the nearest station, and I'll not split upon your night-lines.'

The rustic was thankful enough to escape. We passed over the railway bridge—a wooden beam bridge without a parapet—and joined the detective. We walked amicably together along the line till we came to a cross lane, and then a few minutes' walk brought us to a little village. A small railway hotel stood by the side of the road. We entered, and called for hot brandy-and-water. The girl who waited upon us stared in wonder at our dripping clothes. Our hats had gone, of course, and we had tied handkerchiefs round our heads. The detective took out his pocket-book.

'Honour bright?' he said interrogatively.

'Honour bright,' I replied.

'Well, then, I'll just make a note of this here cheque.—P'r'aps you'll excuse me, miss, if I just step inside the bar; the light's better.'

Despite the 'honour bright,' my friend preferred to keep the bar and glasses and sleepy barmaid between me and the cheque.

He fumbled for his spectacles, found them, wiped them, put them on, brought out a fat note-book; then in his most official judicial manner spread out the cheque into the full light of the guttering tallow candle, and, pencil in hand, proceeded to master its contents.

'D—nation!' he shouted, jumping up, almost upsetting the table; 'what's this here game? What the hangment did you want to pitch me into the river for this blank, blank thing?'

He threw the paper on to the counter; I took it up, and read: 'Admit two to Stalls: David Birdbolt, Manager.'

'Well, anyhow,' said I, 'if we had gone to the shades below, we should have had a good place.'

Harry Clinton told me afterwards that he had found the cheque in his waistcoat-pocket after I had disappeared; he having handed me the theatrical order instead.

There was no scandal on the Buttermilk Iron Company, nor on my friend Harry, arising out of this transaction. I confess that I take a considerable secret pride in my part of it. The government have put me on the Commission of the Peace; and on the Bench I often meet my friend Buckthorn, but he can no longer bear me down by the weight of his bumptiousness. I always feel that I hold a trump card over him. Much of his reputation is due to his having once in single combat half killed a poacher; but what is that to having nearly murdered a policeman? The story somehow oozed out, and it gives me great weight on the Bench, I assure you.

Harry Clinton has retired from the Navigation Office with a handsome pension, economy being now all the rage. I think he'll join us. I think he'll take an active share in the Buttermilk Iron Company, will be our London agent, and no longer the Junior Partner.

A STRING OF GHOST STORIES

BY JAMES GRANT, AUTHOR OF 'THE ROMANCE OF WAR,' ETC.

A BELIEF in the ghost of vulgar superstition is as much exploded in England now as are the opinions advanced by King James in his 'Demonologie.' Yet the learned Bacon admitted that such things might be. Luther, Pascal, Guy Patin, Milton, Dr. Johnson, and even Southey, believed in the existence of such mediums with the unseen world. 'My serious belief amounts to this,' wrote the latter: 'that preternatural impressions are sometimes communicated to us for wise purposes; and that departed spirits are sometimes permitted to manifest themselves.' And had Pope not entertained some similar idea, he had not written:

> 'Tis true, 'tis certain, man, though dead, retains
> Part of himself; the immortal mind remains:
> The *form* subsists without the *body's* aid,
> Aerial semblance and an empty shade.'

Upon the truth or falsehood, the theories or rather hypotheses, of such alleged appearances, we mean not to dwell; but merely to relate a few little anecdotes connected with them, and drawn—save in Lord Brougham's instance—from sources remote and scarce.

In the memoirs of the celebrated Agrippa d'Aubigné, grandfather of Madame de Maintenon, the wife of Louis XIV., a man famous for his zeal in Calvinism and disbelief in the spiritual world, and one whose integrity was deemed alike rigid and inflexible, we read the following of a spectre like that of a nursery tale:

'I was,' he wrote, 'in my bed, and entirely awake, when I heard some one enter my apartment; and perceived at my bedside a woman, remarkably pale, whose clothes rustled against my curtains as she passed. Withdrawing the latter, she stooped towards me, and giving me a kiss that was cold as ice, vanished in a moment!'

D'Aubigné started from bed, and was almost immediately after informed of the sudden death of his mother, to whom he was tenderly attached.

In a letter of Philip, second Earl of Chesterfield, we find a curious story of a double apparition occurring at the same moment, and which, though it somewhat illustrates Ennemosers' theory of polarity, is beyond the pale of modern philosophy.

In the gray daylight of an early morning in 1652, the Earl saw a figure in white, 'like a standing sheet,' appear within a yard of his bedside. He attempted to grasp it; but, eluding him, the figure slid towards the foot of the bed, and melted away. He felt a strange anxiety; but his thoughts immediately turned to the Countess (Lady Anne Percy), who was then at Networth with her father, the Earl of Northumberland, and thither he immediately repaired. On his arrival a footman met him on the staircase, with a packet directed to him from his lady; whom he found with her sister, the Countess of Essex, and a Mrs. Ramsay. He was asked why he had come so suddenly. He told his motive, his alarm and anxiety; and, on perusing the letter in the sealed packet, he found that the Countess had written to him requesting his return; 'as she

had seen a thing in white, with a black face, by her bedside.' These apparitions were identically the same in appearance, and were seen by the Earl and Countess *at the same moment*, though they were in two places forty miles apart. No catastrophe followed. The Earl, however, survived his lady, and lived till the year 1713.

In the *St. James's Chronicle* for 1762 we find a strange story of an apparition being the means of revealing a murder, and bringing the guilty parties to the fatal tree at Tyburn. The narrative was said to have been found among the legal papers of a counsellor of the Middle Temple, then recently deceased.

'In the year 1668 a young gentleman of the West Country, named Stobbine, came to London, and soon after, as ill luck would have it, he wedded a wife of Wapping, the youngest daughter of a Mrs. Alceald; and in the space of fifteen months the providence of God sent them a daughter, which (*sic*) was left under the care of the grandmother, the husband and his wife retiring to their house in the country.'

In 1676, when the daughter was six years old, Mrs. Alceald died, and the child was sent home, and remained there till 1679, when a Mrs. Myltstre, her maternal aunt, 'having greatly increased her means, forsook the canaille and low habitations of Wapping, came into a polite part of the town, took a house among people of quality, and set up for a woman of fashion,' and thither did she invite the Stobbines and their daughter to spend the winter with her. Among her visitors were her husband's brother, who had the title or rank of captain, and who seems to have been a bully and gamester—a 'blood,' in a flowing wig and laced coat—and there was another relation, who practised as an apothecary.

All these five persons dined together on the birthday of the little girl Stobbine, when a terrible catastrophe ensued. In a spirit of play, it was presumed, she took up a sword that was in the room, and pointing it at Mr. Stobbine, cried, 'Stick him, stick him!'

'What!' said he, 'would you stab your father?'

'You are not my father; but Captain Myltstre is.'

Her father, upon this, boxed her ears, and was instantly run through the body by the captain. 'Down he dropped,' we are told, and then his wife, her sister, the captain, and the apothecary, all trampled upon him till he was quite dead, and interring him secretly, gave out that he had returned to the West Country. Time passed on, and though inquiries were made, and messengers sent after the missing Stobbine, he was heard of no more for a time. His daughter was sent to a distant school, and her mother, 'who pretended to go distracted, was sent to a village a few miles out of town, where the captain had a pretty little box for his convenience.'

A memory of the terrible scene she had witnessed haunted the daughter, she had nightly horrible dreams and frights, to the terror of a young lady who slept with her; and she always alleged that a spectre haunted her, a spectre visible to her only, and on these occasions she would exclaim, with every manifestation of horror,

'There is a spirit in the room! It is Mr. Stobbine's spirit. O, how terrible it looks!'

These appearances and her paroxysms led to an inquiry before a justice of the peace; and without any warning given, the whole of the guilty parties were apprehended and committed to the Gate-house, tried at the Old Bailey, 'and condemned, to the entire satisfaction of the county, the court, and all present.'

After this, Stobbine's troubled spirit appeared no more. Mrs. Myltstre was hanged, and her body was

thrown into the gully-hole near her old house in Wapping; Mrs. Stobbine was strangled and burned. The captain and the apothecary were hanged at Tyburn, and the latter was anatomised: and so ended this tragedy.

Another remarkable detection of murder, through the alleged appearance of a ghost, occurred in 1724.

A farmer, returning homeward from Southam market in Warwickshire, disappeared by the way. Next day a man presented himself at the farmhouse, and asked of the wife if her husband had come back.

'No,' she replied; 'and I am under the utmost anxiety and terror.'

'Your terror,' said he, 'cannot surpass mine; for last night as I lay in bed, quite awake, the apparition of your poor husband appeared to me. He showed me several ghastly stabs in his body, which is now lying in a marl-pit.'

The pit was searched, the corpse was found, and the stabs, in number and position, answered in every way to the description given by the ghost-seer, to whom the spectre had named a certain man as the culprit; and this person was committed to prison and brought to trial at Warwick for the crime, before a jury and the Lord Chief-justice Sir Robert (afterwards Lord) Raymond, who was succeeded in 1733 by Sir Philip Yorke. The jury would speedily have brought in a verdict of guilty; but he checked them by saying,

'Gentlemen, you lay more stress on the allegations of this apparition than they will bear. I cannot give credit to these kind of stories. We are now in a court of law, and must determine according to it; and I know not of any law which will admit of the testimony of an apparition; nor yet if it did, doth the ghost appear to give evidence. Crier,' he added, 'call the ghost.'

The farmer's spirit being thrice summoned in vain, Sir Robert again addressed the jury on the hitherto unblemished character of the man accused, and stoutly asserted a belief in his perfect innocence; adding, 'I do strongly suspect that the gentleman who saw the apparition was *himself* the murderer, and knew all about the stabs and the marl-pit without any supernatural assistance; hence I deem myself justified in committing him to close custody till farther inquiries are made.'

The result of these was, that on searching his house sufficient proofs of his guilt were found; he confessed his crime, and was executed at the next assize.

In the list of the officers of the 33d regiment, when serving under Lord Cornwallis in America, and then called the 1st West York, will be found the names of Captain (afterwards Sir John Coape) Sherbrooke and Lieutenant George Wynward. The former had recently joined the 33d from the 4th, or King's Own Regiment. These young men, being similar in tastes and very attached friends, spent much of their time in each other's society, and when off duty were seldom apart. One evening Sherbrooke was in Wynward's quarters. The room in which they were seated had two doors, one that led into the common passage of the officers' barrack, the other into Wynward's bedroom, from which there was no other mode of egress.

Both officers were engaged in study, till Sherbrooke, on raising his eyes from a book, suddenly saw a young man about twenty years of age open the entrance door and advance into the room. The lad looked pale, ghastly, and thin, as if in the last stage of a mortal malady. Startled and alarmed, Captain Sherbrooke called Wynward's attention to their noiseless visitor; and the moment the lieutenant saw him he became ashy white and incapable of speech, and, ere he could recover, the figure passed them both and entered the bedroom.

'Good God—my poor brother!' exclaimed Wynward.

'Your brother!' repeated Sherbrooke in great perplexity. 'There must be some mistake in all this. Follow me.'

They entered the little bedroom—it was tenantless; and Sherbrooke's agitation was certainly not soothed by Wynward expressing his conviction that from the first he believed they had seen a spectre; and they mutually took a note of the day and hour at which this inexplicable affair occurred. Wynward at times tried to persuade himself that they might have been duped by the practical joke of some brother officer; yet his mind was evidently so harassed by it, that when he related what had occurred, all had the good taste to withhold comments, and to await with interest the then slow arrival of the English mails. When the latter came, there were missives for every officer in the regiment except Wynward, whose hopes began to rise; but there was *one* solitary letter for Sherbrooke, which he had no sooner read than he changed colour and left the mess table. Ere long he returned and said,

'Wynward's younger brother is actually no more!' The whole contents of his note were as follows: 'Dear John, break to your friend Wynward the death of his favourite brother.'

He had died at the very moment the apparition had appeared in that remote Canadian barrack. Strange though the story, the veracity of the witnesses was unimpeachable; and Archdeacon Wrangham alludes to it in his edition of Plutarch, who, like Pliny the younger, believed in spectres. Of Wynward, we only know that he was out of the regiment soon after his brother's death; and of Sherbrooke, that he lived to see the three days of Waterloo, became Colonel of the 33d, Commander of the Forces in North America, and died a General and G.C.B.

Prior to accompanying his regiment, the 92d Highlanders, in the Waterloo campaign, the famous Colonel John Cameron, of Fassifern, a grandson of the Lochiel of the 'Forty-five,' dined with Lieutenant-colonel Simon Macdonell, of Morar, who had formerly been in the corps when it was embodied at Aberdeen as the old 100th, or Gordon Highlanders. On the occasion of this farewell dinner there were present other officers of the regiment, some of whom died very recently, and it occurred in the house of Morar, at Arasaig, a wild part of Ardnamurchan, on the western coast of Inverness-shire.

As the guests were passing from the drawing-room towards the dining-room, old Colonel Macdonell courteously paused to usher in Cameron before him, and in doing so he was observed to stagger and become pale, while placing his hands before his face, as if to hide something that terrified him. Cameron saw nothing of this, though others did; and all were aware that subsequently, during dinner, their host seemed disconcerted and 'out of sorts.'

Those unbidden visions known as the *taisch*, or second-sight, were alleged to be hereditary in the family of Morar; and hence when Cameron fell at Quatre Bras a few weeks afterwards, the old Colonel asserted solemnly, that at the moment when Cameron passed before him he saw his figure suddenly become enveloped in a dark shroud, which had blood-gouts upon it about the region of the heart; but no shroud enveloped the gallant Cameron when his foster-brother buried him in the *allée verte* of Brussels, where his body lay for six months, till it was brought home to Kilmalie, and buried under a monument on which is an inscription penned by Scott.

One of the latest testimonies of the existence of a spiritual world is that given in the *Life and Times of Henry Lord Brougham*, written by himself.

In volume first, he tells us that after he left the High School of Edinburgh to attend the University, one of his most intimate friends there was a Mr. G——, with whom, in their solitary walks in the neighbourhood of the city, he frequently discussed and speculated on the immortality of the soul, the possibility of ghosts walking abroad, and of the dead appearing to the living; and they actually committed the folly of drawing up an agreement, written mutually *with their blood*, to the effect, 'that whichever died first should appear to the other, and thus solve any doubts entertained of the life after death.'

G—— went to India, and after the lapse of a few years Brougham had almost forgotten his existence, when one day in winter—the 19th of December—as he was indulging in the half-sleepy luxury of a warm bath, he turned to the chair on which he had deposited his clothes, and thereon sat his old college-chum G——, looking him coolly, quietly, and sadly in the face. Lord Brougham adds that he swooned, and found himself lying on the floor. He noted the circumstance, believing it to be all a dream, and yet, when remembering the compact, he could not discharge from his mind a dread that G—— must have died, and that his appearance, even in a dream, was to be received as a proof of a future state. Sixty-three years afterwards the veteran statesman and lawyer appends the following note to this story of the apparition:

'Brougham, Oct. 16, 1862.—I have just been copying out from my journal the account of this strange dream, *certissima mortis imago*. Soon after my return there arrived a letter from India announcing G——'s death, and stating that he died on the 19th of December! Singular coincidence! Yet when one reflects on the vast number of dreams which night after night pass through our brains, the number of coincidences between the vision and the event are perhaps fewer and less remarkable than a fair calculation of chances would warrant us to expect.'

LOST AT SEA

They watch'd her sail with the favouring gale,
While the sun shone bright on the river;
But little they knew, as she faded from view,
She had sailed away for ever.

Many weary days shall eager eyes gaze,
And hope in long death-throes shall quiver;
But that look was their last, for, a thing of the past,
She has vanish'd, and vanish'd for ever.

A dark mystery, left with the lone sea,
No herald her fate shall deliver;
Men only shall know, mid the sun's setting glow,
They lost her, and lost her for ever.

J. P.

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